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SHAKESPEARE

BY

KARL ELZE, PH. D.

TRANSLATED WITH THE AUTHOR'S SANCTION

BY

L. DORA SCHMITZ

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ESSAYS ON SHAKESPEARE

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

It seems almost superfluous here to inform the reader that the author of these Essays on Shakespeare enjoys a wide reputation in Germany for his extensive researches and studies in the English language and literature, as his name, within the last four years, has repeatedly been brought before the English public. The high estimation in which Dr. Elze is held in his own country is proved by his having been appointed in 1867 Editor of the *Jahrbücher* of the German Shakespeare Society, which are exclusively devoted to the study of our great poet.

The present volume contains a series of Essays which Dr. Elze has contributed to these *Jahrbücher*. He has carefully revised them for this translation, in the hope of rendering them of permanent value to the Shakespeare student. At the present time, when so much is being done to forward the public appreciation and thorough understanding of our greatest poet, it appears to me that these Essays must be peculiarly attractive, as they bring before the student the opinions and theories of the foremost living Shakespeare scholars in Germany; opinions which must

surely be of special interest to Englishmen, when it is considered that Germany, and not his own country, first rightly understood and valued Shakespeare's noble works.

For these reasons it has been thought desirable to present these Essays in a new form to the English public, and as they are of an essentially æsthetic character, it is hoped that they may contribute towards enlarging, in this country, the æsthetical study of Shakespeare's works.

L. D. S.

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THE DATE OF THE 'TEMPEST.'

(1872.)

If in the difficult chapter on the chronology of Shakespeare's dramas there be any one less difficult and less obscure point, it seems to be in regard to the 'Tempest,' ever since Malone's persuasive treatise[1] has led to the general supposition that it must be assigned to the year 1611. Malone, as is well known, bases his proof upon a publication of Silvester Jourdan, which appeared in 1610, under the title of 'A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Isle of Divels,' and which, according to him, Shakespeare made use of in describing the shipwreck and island. The date thus obtained received a remarkable corroboration by a statement in Cunningham's 'Extracts from the Accounts of the Revels at Court,' according to which the 'Tempest'—at all events then a new piece—was played before the king in Whitehall, on Nov. 1, 1611. This statement seemed perfectly in harmony with those internal arguments to which especially German Shakesperean scholars attach great weight. One might indeed be tempted to believe that the poet, in delineating the character of Prospero, thought of himself, and that like him he intended to break his wand, to bury his book; in a word,

[1] 'An Account of the Incidents from which the Title and Part of the Story of Shakespeare's "Tempest" were derived, and its true Date ascertained.' By Edmund Malone. London, 1808–9.

to take leave of the enchanted ground of dramatic poetry. Prospero's last words,

> And thence retire me to my Milan, where
> Every third thought shall be my grave,

seem clearly to hint at Shakespeare's return to Stratford. Carriere[1] accordingly looks upon the 'Tempest' not only as one of the last, but the very last of Shakespeare's creations. The poet, he says, could not possibly conclude his career with a dissonance like that in 'Troilus and Cressida' or 'Timon of Athens,' but must have harmoniously resolved the dissonance; moreover no other work, authenticated to be his, is known to have appeared later than 1611—the date of the 'Tempest.' The masque, according to Carriere, was inserted only in 1613, to celebrate the nuptials of the Prince Palatine Elector with the Princess Elizabeth. To these æsthetic considerations Hertzberg, in the German Shakespeare Society's edition of Schlegel and Tieck (xi. 348, seq.), adds the more concrete reasons which he derives from the style and versification. He considers the most important criterion to be the percentage of double endings, which in Shakespeare's dramas increase in regular succession. According to his calculation in the 'Merchant of Venice' they amount to 15, in the 'Tempest' to 32, and in 'Henry VIII.' to 44 per cent., so that the 'Tempest' is pretty far removed from the first, and placed nearest to the last, 'which, he adds, is otherwise sufficiently confirmed.' Against the united weight of these arguments the differing views of Chalmers, Hunter, and Klement could not gain ground. Chalmers, like Malone before him, establishes the fact, that

[1] 'Die Kunst im Zusammenhange der Culturentwickelung,' IV. 501–505.

in the winter months of 1612, especially on Christmas-day, unusually severe storms prevailed (in one night more than a hundred ships are said to have been wrecked on the English coast), and he believes that it was this circumstance that incited Shakespeare to write the play, which accordingly he assigns to the year 1613. But it is not usual for the working of the poetic mind to be influenced by entirely external and accidental occurrences, and the whole contents of the 'Tempest' prove that the poet started from, and was filled by, quite different motives and ideas. Hunter[1] and Klement,[2] in opposition to all other commentators, maintain the 'Tempest' to be a production of Shakespeare's middle period, and even assign it to Elizabeth's reign, Hunter referring it to the year 1596, Klement without deciding upon a definite year. The treatise of the latter—who, among other things, fancies the old queen to have been the prototype of the witch Sycorax—is not entitled to any particular consideration. Hunter, however, goes methodically and ingeniously to work, only he overlooks or conceals essential points, and thus weakens his arguments. His principal argument is the Prologue to 'Every Man in his Humour,' in which he (and not he alone) discovers unquestionable allusions to Shakespeare in general, and to the 'Tempest' in particular. This Prologue, according to him, was spoken at the first representation of the play at the Rose Theatre in 1596—a supposition which Gifford also considers as undoubted, although he, as a worshipper

[1] 'A Disquisition on the Scene, Origin, Date, &c. of Shakespeare's "Tempest," 1839.' Reprinted in his 'New Illustrations of the Life, Studies, and Writings of Shakespeare,' 1845, i. 123 seqq.

[2] Shakespeare's 'Sturm.' Leipzig, 1846.

of B. Jonson's *quand même*, explains away every allusion to Shakespeare. But this is nothing more than a gratuitous assertion, not supported by any kind of reasons; and there is no definite fact to determine the date of the Prologue, as it is wanting in the quarto of 1601, and is met with for the first time in the folio of 1616—at all events a very ominous circumstance. That the Prologue could not with propriety have been spoken at the representation of the remodelled play at the Blackfriars Theatre, in 1598, may be concluded from the circumstance that Shakespeare —as we know from B. Jonson himself—acted one of the principal parts in it (probably that of Old Knowell). Even had the Prologue not expressly been aimed at Shakespeare, yet the audience, on hearing it, must have pointed to him; and although we have no reason to think particularly well of B. Jonson's character, yet he surely could not go so far, either in his malice or his imprudence, as to challenge one of the chief supporters of his play in so offensive a manner. Neither could Shakespeare in his good nature go so far as to let such a stinging provocation pass unnoticed. The way in which Gifford endeavours to explain the omission of the Prologue in the quarto is extremely weak—he knows of no better reason than 'the publisher's pleasure'—and when he considers a Prologue at the first representation as indispensable, it seems possible that the play was originally furnished with another Prologue. Of the intrinsic arguments which Hunter adduces in favour of his hypothesis, only this may be mentioned, that the awkward, or at least the undramatic, exposition in I. 2 (Prospero's story to Mi-

randa) seems to point to an early composition. Strange it certainly is—as Hunter might likewise have remarked—that this exposition is not assigned to some subordinate personages, according to the usual practice, but to the principal characters themselves; but arguments like these can in no way claim to be considered decisive of the chronological question; for what Hunter thinks the awkward exposition of a beginner may just as well be a liberty, or a carelessness, which Shakespeare even in his maturest period might allow himself. The same applies to the remark that Shakespeare, towards the year 1611, had left the stage of romantic comedy far behind him, and was then occupied with very different and highly tragic subjects. This argument may be answered by the question, why the poet, even towards the end of his career, may not have taken one more 'ride into the old romantic land,' as Wieland has it in the beginning of his 'Oberon.' Hunter justly attaches little weight to such internal reasons, as he knows too well that even in the ablest and most experienced hands they too readily lead to erroneous conclusions. But, in so far as style and versification may be relied upon, they speak against him, without, however, supporting Malone. The fact that Hunter maintains the 'Tempest' to be identical with the 'Love's Labour's Won,' mentioned by Meres, and that he finds the original of Prospero's island in the island of Lampedusa, has only injured his hypothesis. All the latest commentators, therefore—Drake, Gervinus, Ulrici, and Delius—are the more inclined to adhere to the year 1611, as thereby all doubt and hesitation seem to be removed. Gervinus thinks it undeniable that the play was sug-

gested by Jourdan's publication, and that the dates given by Malone and Cunningham have settled the question.

There is, however, a passage which to our knowledge has as yet never been taken into consideration—a passage which compels us to revise the enquiry which is apparently so satisfactorily concluded. In B. Jonson's 'Volpone' (III. 2) the learned Lady Politick Would-Be pays a visit to Volpone, who is feigning illness; she turns the conversation to the Italian poets, without allowing the fluency of her speech to be interrupted by Volpone's aversion to the subject, and by his turning away with half-suppressed maledictions. The passage runs as follows:—

Volp. The poet
As old in time as Plato, and as knowing,
Says that your highest female grace is silence.
Lady P. Which of your poets? Petrarch, or Tasso, or Dante?
Guarini? Ariosto? Aretine?
Cieco di Hadria? I have read them all.
Volp. Is everything a cause to my destruction? [*Aside.*
Lady P. I think I have two or three of them about me.
Volp. The sun, the sea, will sooner both stand still
Than her eternal tongue! nothing can 'scape it. [*Aside.*
Lady P. Here's Pastor Fido—
Volp. Profess obstinate silence;
That's now my safest. [*Aside.*
Lady P. All our English writers,
I mean such as are happy in the Italian,
Will deign to steal out of this author, mainly:
Almostas much as from Montagnié:
He has so modern and facile a vein,
Fitting the time, and catching the court-ear! &c.

'Almost as much as from Montagnié!' Against whom is this thrust directed? What poet of the Elizabethan period borrowed from Montaigne? We cannot discover any except the celebrated lines in the 'Tempest'

(II. 1). From the continual and careful investigations of the Elizabethan literature it might be thought that such passages could not have remained undiscovered if they existed. We are certainly reminded of Hamlet. B. Jonson may likewise have thought of him. Hamlet's views about the uncertainty of death, his persuasion that 'the readiness is all,' his thoughts about suicide, have their prototype in Essai xix. of the first book of Montaigne (*Que philosopher, c'est apprendre à mourir*); and in Essai iii. of the second book (*Coustume de l'Isle de Cea*). The idea that nothing in itself is either good or bad, but that our thinking makes it so, which is expressed not only in 'Hamlet' II. 2, but in other passages of Shakespeare as well, might recall Essai xl. of the first book (*Que le goust des biens et des maux despend en bonne partie de l'opinion que nous en avons*); this is, however, only a specious resemblance, for Montaigne speaks of physical, Shakespeare of moral, good and evil. The description of the music of the spheres in the 'Merchant of Venice' (V. i.) seems likewise taken from Montaigne (Book I., Essai xxii.) which at the same time proves that Shakespeare must have read the French philosopher in the original, for at the time of the composition of the 'Merchant of Venice' (1594) Florio's translation can scarcely have been in existence, or it must have literally followed the maxim, '*Nonum prematur in annum;*' all these passages, however, treat of views and ideas which no doubt were widely spread, and the similarity is too little palpable to justify the reproach of 'stealing.' The passage in the 'Tempest,' on the contrary—apart from its contents—must, even on account of its literalness, have

created a sensation among Shakespeare's contemporaries; his opponents and enviers must have regarded it as a confirmation of Robert Greene's old accusation that Shakespeare was an 'upstart crow, beautified in our feathers.' That the description in Shakespeare is held up to ridicule does not alter the fact of his having borrowed it. B. Jonson, who rarely lets an opportunity pass for a hit at Shakespeare, could all the less resist the temptation of denouncing this act of borrowing, as he may have regarded it as prejudicial to his friend Florio, whose *ipsissima verba* Shakespeare has appropriated. In what an intimate relation B. Jonson stood to Florio is proved by his autograph dedication in the copy of 'Volpone' (1607) in the British Museum: 'To his louing Father and worthy Freind, Mr. John Florio, the ayde of his Muses, Ben: Jonson seales this Testemony of Freindship and Love.' May we not read between the lines of this dedication, 'Among other things, you will, in this play, read with satisfaction how I have despatched this "onlie Shakescene," this "upstart crow," for the theft he has perpetrated upon you?' B. Jonson seems to have had a particular grudge against the 'Tempest,' perhaps on account of the inserted masque, which may have seemed to him an encroachment upon his own special domain. If we leave the Prologue to 'Every Man in his Humour' out of the question as doubtful, yet the allusion in the Introduction to 'Bartholomew Fair' is undeniable, and even beyond Gifford's skill of interpretation. 'If there be never a servant-monster ("Tempest," III. 2: Servant-monster, drink to me, &c.), in the fair, who can help it, he says, nor a nest of antiques? He (viz. Jonson) is loth

to make Nature afraid in his plays, like those that beget tales (the 'Winter's Tale,' with the Bohemian coast, where Perdita first appears as an infant and then as a full-grown maiden), *tempests*, and such like drolleries?' Granted that B. Jonson's words in 'Volpone' did not apply to Shakespeare but to some unknown and undiscoverable person, are we in this case to suppose that Shakespeare, six years *after* this denunciation—perhaps in defiance of it—again 'stole' from Montaigne? if, namely, we assign the 'Tempest' to 1611. The possibility that the lines in question can be a later addition of B. Jonson's is a very easy makeshift, which ought at least to be supported by some other testimony before it deserves to be believed.

If, therefore, the passage applies to the 'Tempest'—and it is impossible for us to say to what else—the composition of the latter must be assigned to a date different from what has hitherto been supposed. 'Volpone' is dedicated to the two Universities, and B. Jonson dates this dedication with an accuracy which greatly serves our purpose: 'From my house in the Black-Friars, this 11th day of February, 1607.' We know, besides, that the play was acted as early as 1605; and Mr. Halliwell speaks even of a quarto of 1605, which is probably a mistake.[1] Thus the 'Tempest' would at latest fall to the year 1604, a year after Florio's 'Montaigne.' This in itself is much more credible than the supposition that Shakespeare, as late as 1611, should have referred to and made use of this book, which was then no longer new. If Shakespeare was struck by the surprising idea of the natural state—such as he

[1] 'Dictionary of Old English Plays.'

met with in Montaigne's description—he must doubtless have felt induced to make an early use of it.

But what then becomes of the entry in Cunningham's 'Revels' Accounts' and of Malone's hypothesis, which the latter has himself declared as final and irrefutable? Well, the first must be considered as settled, since it has been shown that, in all probability, all those passages in the 'Revels' Accounts' which refer to Shakespeare are forgeries.[1] The investigations on this point have unfortunately not been brought to a close; but even if the suspicion raised should not be confirmed, yet the entry is nevertheless completely worthless in regard to the question of date, for, as Hunter justly and emphatically maintains, it was by no means only new pieces that were acted at Court.[2] This admits of so little doubt that the passage in Cunningham can in no case again be appealed to. As to Malone's hypothesis, it will probably have to share the fate of many other hypotheses which have been proved untenable; it would, in fact, scarcely have enjoyed so great a reputation had not the entry in the 'Revels' Accounts,' as long as it was considered genuine, served it as an apparently incontrovertible corroboration. The points of coincidence between Shakespeare and Jourdan enumerated by Malone are briefly as follows: Of the whole fleet, with Shakespeare, only the king's ship is wrecked, just as in the expedition to Virginia it was only the admiral's ship that was driven out of its course and destroyed. This circumstance, however, necessarily proceeds from the story of the play, and is be-

[1] See the 'Athenæum,' 1868, i. 863.
[2] 'Illustrations,' i. 126, 148.

sides an event so likely to occur, that it did not require to be borrowed from Jourdan. Not only on Columbus's first voyage of discovery was the flag-ship separated from the others in a similar way, but also in Drake's voyage round the world (1577-1580) the same thing happened in the Straits of Magellan, so that Drake had to sail on alone along the west coast of America. Still less did the poet require an authority for the circumstance that passengers and sailors pray, and bid one another and their distant friends farewell—this is naturally done at every shipwreck; or for the fact that some of the sailors, exhausted by their almost superhuman exertions at the pumps, fall asleep—in Shakespeare Ariel's charm is mentioned as an accessory cause; or that the shipwreck takes place on the coast, and that not a life is lost—all this arises with internal necessity out of the plot and story; and to assume that the poet required to have all this furnished to his hands by accounts of travels is to charge him most unjustly with want of imagination and invention. It makes a peculiar impression to find that Malone fancies to recognise Jourdan's words: 'Fortunately the ship was driven and jammed between *two rocks*, fast lodged and locked for further budging,' in the lines spoken by Ariel (I. 2):—

> Safely in harbour
> Is the king's ship; in the *deep nook*, where once
> Thou call'dst me up at midnight.

The italics are Malone's. Has he really allowed himself to be deceived by the similarity of the words, *rock* and *nook*? Even the title of Jourdan's pamphlet, 'A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Isle of Divels, &c.,' is produced as a proof, by Malone,

without regard to the circumstance that Shakespeare could be sufficiently acquainted with that surname given to the Bermudas from Tymme's 'Silver Watch Bell,' and from other sources.[1] In this widely circulated book the Bermudas are described in the following words (we quote from Hunter): 'It (viz. the Isle of Bermudas) is called the Isle of Devils, for to such as approach near the same, there do not only appear fearful sights of devils and evil spirits, but also mighty tempests and most terrible and continual thunder and lightning; and the noise of horrible cries, with screeching, do so affright and amaze those that come near the place, that they are glad, with all might and main, to fly and speed them thence with all possible haste they can.'[2] Hunter justly points out that there is a great family likeness between all storms at sea and shipwrecks, and that it is only the coincidence of a most extraordinary occurrence or of a most extraordinary mode of expression, that can justify the supposition that one narrator borrowed from another. Now there exist no such coincidences between Jourdan and the 'Tempest,' and Malone's arguments have nothing cogent about them; it is even questionable whether we could allow them to pass, even if the passage in 'Volpone' did not stand in the way. Still less tenable we think Johannes Meissner's conjecture, that Shakespeare made use of the description of

[1] The date of the first edition of Tymme's 'Silver Watch Bell' we have not been able to ascertain; as, however, according to Hunter's 'Illustrations,' i. 154, the tenth edition of it appeared in the year 1614, the first was in all probability published before 1600.

[2] According to Hunter, popular belief ascribed ghosts and ghostly sounds to other solitary islands as well, and Marco Polo (in Frampton's translation, 1579), relates the same phenomena of the desert of Lop in Asia.

the Huns in Ammianus Marcellinus (in Dr. Holland's translation, 1609).[1]

Among the real sources of the 'Tempest'—and of them there is an *embarras de richesses*—we reckon Eden's 'Historye of Travaile in the East and West Indies' (1577), to which Shakespeare owes his demon Setebos, and most probably also the prototype of Caliban; Raleigh's 'Discovery of the large, rich, and bewtiful Empire of Guiana, &c.' (1596); [2] Hakluyt's 'Voyages,' (1598), from which he likewise has taken some features;[3]

[1] 'Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft,' V. 204. 'Untersuchungen über Shakespeare's "Sturm" (1872),' p. 62 seqq.

[2] Raleigh narrates, among other things: 'To the west of Caroli are divers nations of canibals and of those Ewaipanoma without heads;' and on page 70: 'Next unto Arui there are two rivers, Atoica and Caora, and on that branch which is called Caora are a nation of people whose heads appear not above their shoulders, which, though it may be thought a mere fable, yet for mine own part, I am resolved it is true, because every child in the provinces of Arromaia and Canuri affirm the same; they are called Ewaipanoma; they are reported to have their eyes in their shoulders, and their mouths in the middle of their breasts.' Compare 'Tempest,' III. 3:—

> When we were boys,
> Who would believe that there were mountaineers
> Dew-lapp'd like bulls, whose throats had hanging at 'em
> Wallets of flesh? or that there were such men
> Whose heads stood in their breasts? which now we find
> Each putter-out of five for one will bring us
> Good warrant of.

Shakespeare may just as well have taken the title of his play from Raleigh's words, 'The rest of the Indies for calms and diseases very troublesome, and the Bermudas a hellish sea for thunder, lightning, and storms,' as from the 'True and Sincere Declaration' of the Council of Virginia, as Malone thinks.

[3] 'We have an account of the shipwreck in those seas of one Henry May, who arrived in England in August 1594, in a vessel which he built at Bermuda. The narrative is in Hakluyt, as is also an account of a voyage by Sir Robert Dudley, the enterprising and ingenious son of the Earl of Leicester, who returned in May 1595, having directed his course to the Bermudas, hoping there to find the Havannah fleet dispersed. "The

and perhaps John Brereton's 'Briefe and true Relation of the Discovery of the North Part of Virginia, being a most pleasant, fruitful, and commodious soile' (1602). According to Hunter's convincing arguments, Ariosto's description of the great tempest (in Sir John Harrington's translation, 1591), comes in for a share also; that it gave Shakespeare some suggestions can scarcely be doubted. Lastly, in regard to the demonological parts, the poet may have found suggestive material in King James's 'Demonology,' which was published just at the time (1603), and in Dr. Dee. As to Montaigne, Hunter has as good as proved that Florio's translation, partially at least, was known in manuscript years before its publication; it was entered on the Stationers' Register as early as 1599; and it is alluded to in 1600 by Sir William Cornwallis, though not by name. As Florio was a teacher of languages in the house of Shakespeare's patron, Southampton, it certainly is possible that Shakespeare may have perused the manuscript of his work; yet it is obvious that the essayist Cornwallis had a greater interest in becoming acquainted with the manuscript translation of his celebrated predecessor than the poet Shakespeare, who would have preferred looking about him for novels to furnish him with dramatic incidents. It must also have been of more consequence to Florio to play his translation into Sir William's hands than into Shakespeare's, as he might think of gaining a desirable patron in the former, but not in the latter. Shakespeare, at all events, knew Montaigne, both in the original and in the

fleet," he says, "I found not, but foul weather enough to scatter many fleets."' Hunter, i. 152.

translation; the lines in the 'Tempest,' as already remarked, partly contain Florio's own words. This circumstance would of itself be a sufficient reason not to place the 'Tempest' before the year 1603, which B. Jonson's words would not forbid; there is, however, another allusion in our play which puts in a decided veto against such an attempt, viz. the well-known lines:—

> Like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, &c.

It is undeniable that the poet in this passage had the Earl of Sterline's tragedy of 'Darius' in his mind, where we read:—

> Let greatness of her glassy scepters vaunt,
> Not scepters, no, but reeds, soon bruised, soon broken;
> And let this worldly pomp our wits enchant,
> All fades, and scarcely leaves behind a token.
> Those golden palaces, those gorgeous halls,
> With furniture superfluously fair,
> Those stately courts, those sky-encount'ring walls,
> Evanish all like vapours in the air.

The Earl of Sterline's 'Darius' was published at Edinburgh in 1603, at London in 1604. Nothing in this case suggests the conjecture that Shakespeare knew this play in manuscript, and those who should maintain that the Earl of Sterline and not Shakespeare was the imitator will assuredly find no one to share their belief. Moreover, this borrowing, too, opposes the year 1611 being regarded as the date of the 'Tempest;' for it is evident that the passage made a great impression upon Shakespeare, and that it involuntarily dropped from his pen while still fresh in his memory.

We thus gain a boundary back as well as forwards; the 'Tempest' must have been written after 1603 and

before 1605; it must fall in the year 1604, and it is remarkable how much the historical circumstances of the time agree with this date. We know that Southampton throughout life was one of the most zealous supporters of voyages of discovery and of the colonisation of America. In conjunction with his brother-in-law, Lord Arundel, he equipped a ship for the purpose of exploring the coast of Virginia, the charge of which was entrusted to Captain Weymouth, who set sail in April 1605, returned in July of the same year, and immediately published an account of the voyage.[1] Such an important undertaking would naturally be preceded by considerations and preparations which must have reached back to the year 1604. The minds of men generally at that time were filled with geographical discovery, and the colonisation resulting from it. Not only did they see new and grand prospects opened for navigation, commerce, and industry, for national prosperity and national power, but also for the diffusion of civilisation and religion over the earth. The Earl of Southampton, as Malone says, was particularly stimulated by the desire to win the wild natives of America over to civilisation and Christianity, and Shakespeare could not possibly remain uninfluenced by the ideas and plans which filled the minds of his patron and friends. In fact this tendency of the age is re-echoed in the 'Tempest.' 'Prospero,' to use Carriere's words, 'has subdued the rude savage, the mixture of demon and animal, and taken the sovereignty of

[1] 'A Prosperous Voyage in the Discovery of the North Part of Virginia.' By Captain George Weymouth. 1605. From Malone's 'Account of the Incidents,' &c., p. 3 seqq.

the island from him, but has made amends for his usurpation by endeavouring to raise him to the state of humanity; we may herein find an answer to the great question of the time, how far the higher culture is justified in crushing the lower stage of development.' If we consider these circumstances, the respective passages of the 'Tempest' make the impression on our mind as if they were addressed to the Earl of Southampton, and intended to stimulate him in his enterprise and to remove any doubts regarding the question of property. For however often Caliban may repeat that he has inherited the island from his mother, and that Prospero has taken it from him, still each time he is repulsed with victorious superiority by the latter. In so far Caliban represents the native American, and Prospero the Earl of Southampton. It would seem as if, in 1611, such doubts had already been overcome, and as if also on this account we were driven back to the year 1604.

One more feature may be added for completing the picture. In II. 2 there are allusions to the spectacles by which the worthy citizens of London were made acquainted with the curiosities of the newly-discovered lands; Trinculo mentions dead Indians and painted sea-monsters. It is questionable whether, as late as 1611, dead Indians could have been exhibited with success, since, as is evident from 'Henry VIII.' (V. 4), living Indians exercised a far greater attraction, especially on the female public. The first Indians which the English public became acquainted with were, probably, the man, woman, and child brought over by Frobisher in 1577, on his second voyage. They excited great

interest, and were painted for the queen; the picture was for a long time in Hampton Court. The man and woman died at Bristol, the child in London.[1] Captain Weymouth, in 1605, also brought over five Indians, and from the annually increasing intercourse with Virginia (especially in 1609 and 1610) they became an almost everyday sight, so that the exhibition of dead Calibans in 1611 would scarcely have proved remunerative. As regards the painted sea-monster, the 'strange fish,' such a creature in all probability was exhibited in the very year 1604. This is evident from the fact that in this year a pamphlet was entered on the Stationers' Registers under the title of 'A strange Report of a monstrous Fish that appeared in the form of a Woman from her waist upwards, seen in the Sea.'[2] Had Shakespeare alluded to this exhibition as late as 1611, it would have been without either wit or effect. It may certainly be argued that spectacles of this kind were continued for many years; but, in connection with other circumstances and arguments, this coincidence is not insignificant either, and at all events must not be left unnoticed.

If, then, all external arguments and indications are in favour of the year 1604, it only remains for us to come to an understanding with those critics who see in this play the poet's farewell to poetry. This opinion—apart from the high percentage of double endings—is certainly based more upon feeling than upon a well-founded argumentation, and the poet so astonishingly objective need by no means have thought of himself in

[1] Rye, 'England as seen by Foreigners,' 205, Note 40.
[2] Compare the Editors on the passage referred to.

delineating the character of Prospero. We have, however, no reason to dispute this conception, as it can be made to agree excellently well with our own hypothesis. In a word, we believe that such a leave-taking from poetry on Shakespeare's part might very well have taken place in the year 1604; nay, much more probably than in the year 1611. It cannot be sufficiently urged that Shakespeare, like all great geniuses, began his career very early, and ran through it with great rapidity. Knight is perfectly right when he 'advisedly' says that there is absolutely no proof that Shakespeare had not written the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' the 'Comedy of Errors,' 'Love's Labour's Lost,' the 'Taming of the Shrew,' and 'All's Well that Ends Well,' before 1590.[1] Do we not possess in the well-known sallies in Greene's 'Groatsworth of Wit' an irrefutable proof that Shakespeare was a productive, generally known, and favourite dramatic poet as early as 1592, and that he had already acquired almost the sole sovereignty of the stage? And does not the very expression, 'an upstart crow,' clearly suggest that he had attained this sovereignty in the space of a few years? The fact bears in itself the stamp of credibility, and is confirmed by the most eloquent examples. B. Jonson, whose poetical genius does not reach to Shakespeare's belt, brought his best work ('Every Man in his Humour') upon the stage at the age of twenty-one; Marlowe wrote his 'Tamburlaine' in his twenty-second, and 'Dr. Faustus' in his twenty-fourth year; Shelley composed 'Queen Mab' at eighteen; and Byron the first two cantos of 'Childe Harold' at the age of

[1] 'Shakespeare, a Biography,' 347 seq.

twenty-one; Handel won laurels before he was twenty-four years old, and in his twenty-sixth year he was praised as the 'Orpheus of his day.' According to Meres's list, which is anything but complete, Shakespeare at thirty-four years of age had already written, besides his two narrative poems, twelve plays, some of them dramas which in the usual course of nature could scarcely have been expected at so youthful an age; for instance, 'Richard III.' At the same time Shakespeare had already acquired so large a fortune—by the way another proof that he had then written more than what Meres adduces—that he could think of retiring, which is proved by the purchase of New Place in 1597. It is by no means saying too much that at the turn of the century Shakespeare already stood in the full zenith of his glory, in regard to his poetical creations as well as in regard to worldly circumstances. This fact is all the more conceivable, the more carefully we consider the ease and rapidity with which he produced, and which is again a characteristic feature of all great geniuses. Numerous examples of this are found on all hands; Byron, at Ravenna, within two years, had completed five and commenced other two dramas, apart from a not inconsiderable number of other poems; Walter Scott's novels followed one another with such astonishing rapidity that his readers could scarcely keep pace with him; Grillparzer, according to his own account, wrote his 'Ahnfrau' in fifteen or sixteen days; Handel composed the 'Messiah' in twenty-four days; Mozart his 'Titus' in eighteen; Chapman translated twelve books of the 'Iliad' in six weeks; and the 'Knight of the Burning Pestle' was

written in eight days. Two striking examples of great fertility and rapid production are Henry Chettle, whose numerous plays seem to have been composed within a few years, and Thomas Heywood, who in 1633 'claimed for himself the authorship, entirely or in part, of 220 dramas,' and Heywood was withal a much-engaged actor, who played almost daily. Rapid production in Shakespeare's day was so generally considered characteristic of poetic genius, that slow workers thought themselves called upon to refute the blame which thereby accrued to them. Two passages in B. Jonson and John Webster are, in this respect, so characteristic not only of their authors, but of the general mode of production at the time, that they must find a place here. Jonson, of whom it was said that he required a year to write a play, in the Prologue to 'Volpone' makes the following defence :—

> This we were bid to credit from our poet,
> Whose true scope, if you would know it,
> In all his poems still hath been this measure,
> To mix profit with your pleasure :
> And not as some, whose throats their envy failing,
> Cry hoarsely, All he writes is railing ;
> And when his plays come forth, think they can flout them,
> With saying, He was a year about them.
> To this there needs no lie, but this his creature,
> Which was two months since no feature ;
> Although he dares give them five lives to mend it,
> 'Tis known, *five weeks fully penn'd it*,
> From his own hand, without a co-adjutor,
> Novice, journey-man, or tutor.[1]

John Webster, in the Preface (to the Reader) to his 'Vittoria Corombona' (1612), says : 'To those who report I was a long time in finishing this tragedy, I

[1] The 'Poetaster,' according to the Prologue, was written in fifteen weeks.

confess, I do not write with a goose quill winged with two feathers; and, if they will needs make it my fault, I must answer them with that of Euripides to Alcestides, a tragick writer: Alcestides objecting that Euripides had only, in three days, composed three verses, whereas himself had written three hundred; thou tell'st truth (quoth he); but here's the difference, thine shall only be read for three days, whereas mine shall continue for three ages.' Shakespeare's plays are without doubt the production of a happy hit; they did not drop, but they streamed from his pen; he has at times remodelled them, but never filed away laboriously at the diction. Webster, in the Preface just quoted, speaks very pointedly of 'the right happy and copious industry of Mr. Shakespeare,' in contrast to the predicates he bestows upon other dramatists. This agrees with the well-known assertion of Heminge and Condell, that 'his mind and hand went together, and what he thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot on his papers.' The story, therefore, that Shakespeare, in compliance with a wish of Elizabeth, finished the 'Merry Wives of Windsor' in a fortnight, sounds anything but incredible; and Drake's opinion, that not more than two plays a year must be ascribed to Shakespeare, is altogether arbitrary.

Thus Shakespeare's creative activity is comprised within a shorter space of time than is generally assumed. If he commenced early it is conceivable and natural that he should also have left off early. What reader of the 'Sonnets' does not recollect those passages where the poet represents himself to his youthful friend as a man who is growing old, or as one who has already

become old, and gives himself up to painful reflections on the perishable nature of everything earthly, such as are also found in 'Hamlet' (second quarto, 1604), and in the 'Tempest'? This is most impressively and most beautifully done in Sonnet 73 :—

> That time of year thou may'st in me behold
> When yellow leaves, or none or few, do hang
> Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
> Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
> In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
> As after sunset fadeth in the west,
> Which by-and-by black night doth take away,
> Death's second self, that seals up all in rest. &c.

We here have the same 'autumnal' mood which Johannes Meissner has pointed out as pervading the 'Tempest.'[1] Now although the strictly autobiographical interpretation of the 'Sonnets' is set aside, and they are recognised in the main as the productions of a freely creative imagination, yet we must not go so far as to deny all and every substratum of the poet's own experience of life, all and every reference to his personality; we must not place these poems in the same category with such poetic dallying as is displayed in the 'Jeux Floraux,' or by the shepherds of the Pegnitz. Shakespeare was too much of a realistic poet to stoop to such idle verse-making. In interpreting the 'Sonnets' we shall therefore hit the right thing as little by exclusively applying the principle of free fancy, as by exclusively adhering to the autobiographical. *Medio tutissimus ibis.* The frequent occurrence of allusions to old age doubtless justifies the conclusion that an actual state of the poet's mind finds its expression in them, although

[1] 'Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare Gesellschaft,' V. 212 seqq. 'Untersuchungen über Shakespeare's "Sturm,"' p. 96 seqq.

in a poetically exaggerated manner. Hence the 'Sonnets' and the 'Tempest' mutually explain and confirm each other, and the latter, which would thus fall in Shakespeare's fortieth year, even in regard to point of time agrees with the former, which probably may have been completed about the same time. An external confirmation of this surmise may surely be found in Shakespeare's early baldness, which, to judge from the only two authentic portraits (Droeshout's and the bust at Stratford), must have commenced in his fourth decade. We need scarcely add that such an early feeling of old age is by no means without example. Montaigne retired at the age of thirty-eight, because he felt himself old; and Byron became grey in the middle of his thirties, and the feeling of old age was creeping upon him.

Lastly, if we cast a glance at Shakespeare's circumstances in life we shall there, too, find a turn which serves to confirm our hypothesis in the most striking manner. Shakespeare's dislike of theatrical life—increasing with his years—his dissatisfaction with a profession which was but little esteemed, have repeatedly been discussed. It cannot be doubted that he sought to withdraw himself from the latter as soon as possible, and that he aimed at the independent life of a gentleman, as an honourable haven of rest. It is evident that since the commencement of the century he began to direct his thoughts and activity prominently to business affairs, and to the management of his acquired property. In May, 1602, he purchased the large estate of William Combe—107 acres of arable land, for 320*l.*—and on the 24th July, 1605, he acquired the tithes of

Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe, for 440*l.* According to the modern value of money these two items correspond to a sum of nearly 3,800*l.* Compared with these two grand acquisitions, all the others sink into the shade. Assuredly the carrying on of these affairs and the administration of the different properties at Stratford must have taken up a great deal of the poet's time; the collecting of the tithes would of itself demand the whole activity and circumspection of a man of business. It gave rise to all kinds of difficulties, trouble, and law business; at least we can conceive no other reason why Shakespeare's son-in-law, Dr. Hall, should have parted with this lucrative property. We may remark, in passing, that this investment of capital, so unusual in a poet and actor, seems to us to contain an argument for the supposition, which is probable also for other reasons, that Shakespeare in his youth had acquired a practical knowledge of law, and commenced the career of an advocate. Now are we to believe that an administration of property so heterogeneous and one evidently carried on not without inclination and pleasure, went hand in hand with poetic production, and not rather that the poetic activity became gradually extinguished by its predominance? Assuredly, the tithe-farmer Shakespeare supplanted the poet Shakespeare. If we fix the 'Tempest' in 1604, the farewell which the poet therein seems to take of poetry accords wonderfully with his transition to the activity of a proprietor of lands and capital, for this transition was most obviously completed by the acquisition of the tithes. At the same time it need not be doubted that Shakespeare, even after this time, may

have once or twice re-entered the service of the Muses; in other words, that the 'Tempest' was not his last play, but that he—as in our own day is customary with travelling artists—may have come forward with a drama for the last, very last, and positively the last time; but in the main his dramatic career and regular production closed with the 'Tempest.' That Shakespeare withdrew from the stage in 1604 is made probable by various indications. In B. Jonson's 'Sejanus' (1603) he is still mentioned among the actors, but no longer in 'Volpone' (1605). Also the well-known passage in the pamphlet 'Gamaliel Ratsey's Ghost' (1606) which evidently refers to Shakespeare, seems to confirm the supposition that about this time he 'grew weary of playing.' If Shakespeare, according to Mr. Halliwell's discovery, acted in Somerset House, by command of King James, in 1604, before the Spanish Ambassador,[1] this may have been an exceptional case, and by no means contradicts our view. Towards 1609 Shakespeare removed to Stratford, lived there as a gentleman, and thus separated himself more and more from London and the stage. The traditional supposition that in his retirement at New Place he annually wrote two plays, is devoid of every foundation. Dramatic poetry stood in too close a connection with the theatrical profession to admit of such an isolated existence; and Shakespeare's retiring from the latter, in and of itself, renders his discontinuance of the former very probable. Moreover Rowe says nothing of Shakespeare's protracted literary activity at Stratford, but on the contrary relates that he gave

[1] The 'Athenæum,' 1871, ii. 51.

himself up to ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends! When we find Shakespeare repeatedly, and especially in 1614, returning to London for a shorter or longer sojourn, this may possibly have been in connection with the representations of his later poetical productions; the letters of Thomas Greene, however, furnish us with irrefutable proofs that in 1614 he came to London in pursuit of business, concerning the enclosure of Welcombe Fields, which must have greatly affected his interests as a proprietor. This business indeed filled the thoughts of the whole town of Stratford, as whose advocate and counsellor Shakespeare acted in the matter.

In conclusion we again return to the point we started from. Lady Politick Would-Be does not merely speak of the borrowings from Montaigne, but also from Guarini, on the part of such English poets as are acquainted with the Italian language. It is not easy to say at whom Jonson here directs his shaft, and indeed all the less so as in 1602 the 'Pastor Fido' was translated into English, so that from that time forth the knowledge of Italian was no longer requisite for the purpose of stealing from Guarini. The charge cannot apply to Fletcher's 'Faithful Shepherdess,' which at all events was a later play than 'Volpone.' Can it, perhaps, be the 'Maid's Metamorphosis' (1600), or 'Love's Metamorphosis,' that is meant, the latter of which is designated on the title-page as *A Wittie and Courtly Pastoral*, which would chime in with B. Jonson's words, *catching the court ear*? Or is it Lodge's 'Rosalynd' (although no drama), or Shakespeare's 'As You Like It'? Or Daniel's 'Arcadia,' which was

acted in 1605 at Oxford, and printed in 1616 (according to Mr. Halliwell's 'Dictionary of Old Plays')? It would then have to be placed directly before 'Volpone,' which was on the stage in the same year. Or are the words, 'such as are happy in the Italian,' in so far a taunt on Shakespeare as they imply that he had not borrowed from Guarini because he did not understand Italian? From numerous indications, however, we must assume that he, in fact, did understand Italian. Enough; we are here groping completely in the dark. But that, even in this case, traps may have been set for Shakespeare, may easily be believed when we bear in mind that Jonson himself subsequently wrote an (unfinished) pastoral drama, the 'Sad Shepherd,' in which he undertook to show how this species should be treated, and that in this play allusions to Shakespeare are again to be traced. B. Jonson begins with transplanting his pastoral drama upon English ground; Shakespeare's Forest of Arden he replaces by Sherwood Forest, his foreign characters by national English personages. In the Prologue he attacks the melancholy prevailing in this kind of poetry, which involuntarily recalls the melancholy Jacques to our mind. Eglamour's reflection about the music of the spheres in III. 2 has the appearance of a parody on the well-known passage in the fifth act of the 'Merchant of Venice,'

> Look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold, &c.;

and Jonson comprises his judgment upon this flight of Shakespeare's muse, which from his sober point of view is objectionable, in Clarion's words,

> Alas! this is a strain'd but innocent phant'sie.

All this sounds as if he intended to give Shakespeare a lecture. Further Clarion's words (I. 2),

> The truest lovers are least fortunate,

remind us of the incomparably finer line in 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream,'

> The course of true love never did run smooth;

and Maid Marian's hunt in the morning, as also her conversation about the dogs, recalls Theseus's and Hippolyta's hunt in the same comedy.

Thus, if the blame of having borrowed from Guarini should likewise have been directed against Shakespeare, it would only be an additional confirmation that the theft from Montaigne refers to nothing else than the passage in the 'Tempest.'

'A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.'

(1868.)

In Germany, as well as in England, it has repeatedly been pointed out that 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream' in its character resembles a masque. It is true that we possess comparatively few indications for forming a correct estimate of the earlier state of masques, yet these few are sufficient to enable us to judge of the resemblance between them and Shakespeare's most charming comedy. We know that masques undoubtedly arose out of 'dumb shows,' whose chief attraction consisted in splendid costumes and decorations, in music and dances, and which were only gradually furnished with dialogue. From the fact that the object of masques was to celebrate marriages in high life and similar occasions, it is obvious that it was not their aim to solve a dramatic problem; in them the carrying out of an action and the delineation of characters always remained a secondary object, not to say that they were excluded. On the other hand allegories and mythological subjects predominated. These fanciful and ever-varying pageants, as Drake says, 'had higher aims and more important effects, and, while ostensibly constructed for the purposes of compliment and entertainment, either directly inculcated some lesson of moral wisdom, or more immediately obtained

their end by impersonating the vices and virtues, and exhibiting a species of ethic drama.' Masques did not reach their highest perfection in the reign of Henry VIII., as Warton maintains, but under James I., through Jonson, whose masques are declared both by Gifford, his enthusiastic admirer and apologiser, and by the less prejudiced Drake, to be not only the flower of their species, but the flower of all Jonson's poetical productions as well. James's and B. Jonson's pedantic learning met in the pleasure which both of them derived from this versified mythology, while it opened to the queen a welcome field for the display of her love of pomp. Jonson gave the masque a regular structure and definite articulation; above all, he made a sharp distinction between the actual masque and the anti-masque, or interlude as it had previously been called. The former was kept dignified and splendid, for in it appeared the noble amateurs who were emphatically styled the 'Maskers;' the farcical anti-masque, on the other hand, was performed partly by servants, partly by actors hired for the purpose, and was generally separated from the actual masque by a change of scene. It was developed into a comic counterpart of the masque, where all kinds of super- and sub-human creatures delighted the spectators with their 'Galliards' and 'Corantos,' whereas the 'Maskers' only took part in the minuet-like 'Measures.' The anti-masque was frequently divided into two semi-choruses, and several anti-masques sometimes occur in one and the same play.[1] Jonson, who possessed little talent for humour and wit, and was inclined to pedantic pathos, accord-

[1] See B. Jonson's 'Masque of Augurs, with the Several Anti-masques.'

ingly thought rather disparagingly of anti-masques; in 'Neptune's Triumph' he calls them 'things so heterogene to all device, mere by-works, and at best outlandish nothings.'

It is, of course, out of the question to suppose that Jonson's masques influenced 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream;' it could more readily be conceived that the latter exercised an influence upon Jonson. At least in 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream' the two main portions, masque and anti-masque, are divided in an almost Jonsonian manner. The love-stories of Theseus and the Athenian youths—to use Schlegel's words—'form, as it were, a splendid frame to the picture. Theseus and Hippolyta only represent, but with stately pomp.' Into this frame, which corresponds to the actual masque, the anti-masque is inserted, and the latter again is divided into the semi-choruses of the fairies (for they too belong to the anti-masque) and the clowns.[1] Shakespeare has, of course, treated the whole with the most perfect artistic freedom. The two parts do not, as is frequently the case in masques, proceed internally unconnected by the side of each other, but are most skilfully interwoven. The anti-masque, in the scenes between Oberon and Titania, rises to the full poetic height of the masque, while the latter, in the dispute between Hermia and Helena, does indeed not enter the domain of the comic, but still diminishes in dignity, and Theseus in the fifth act actually descends to the jokes of clowns. The Bergo-

[1] In Jonson's 'Love's Welcome' (1634) we also meet with 'A Dance of Mechanics,' in which Chesil, *the Carver;* Dresser, *the Plumber;* Quarrel, *the Glazier;* and Fret, *the Plaisterer,* figure among others.

mask dance performed by the clowns forcibly reminds us of the outlandish nothingness of the anti-masque, as pointed out by Jonson. Moreover, we feel throughout the play that like the masques it was originally intended for a private entertainment. Oberon's song at the conclusion—

> Now, until the break of the day,
> Through this house each fairy stray.
> To the best bride-bed will we,
> Which by us shall blessed be ;
> And the issue there create
> Ever shall be fortunate.
> So shall all the couples three
> Ever true in loving be, &c.

evidently contains the poet's congratulations upon a marriage ; the lines can scarcely be understood otherwise.

The resemblance with the masques is still heightened by the completely lyrical, not to say operatic stamp of the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream.' There is no action which develops of internal necessity, and the poet has here, as Gervinus says, 'completely laid aside his great art of finding a motive for every action.' The action is only carried on by external causes, especially by magic, and indeed, to continue in Dr. Wölffel's words, 'not merely by one accident, which, as for instance in the "Comedy of Errors," runs singly through the action, tying the knot of the intrigue more and more close, until in the end it is recognised of itself, and thus readily unravels the complication, but from scene to scene it ever requires a new accident or charm to make the action proceed.'[1] In a word, exactly as in the masques, everything is an occurrence and a

[1] Album des Nürnberger Literarischen Vereins für 1852, p. 114.

living picture rather than a plot, and the delineation of the characters is accordingly given only with slight touches. Dr. Wölffel endeavours to show the characteristic distinctions between Lysander and Demetrius, as well as those between Hermia and Helena; he finds that the outlines of the acting figures are definite enough, but nevertheless is obliged to admit that they are less perceptibly drawn than usual. According to Ulrici, 'only the clumsiest æsthetic misapprehension can here demand a sharp and detailed delineation of characters;' every one of them he thinks is kept 'in a hazy twilight.'

These points of comparison sufficiently show the correctness of one of Halpin's remarks, namely, that in the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' the masque imperceptibly has passed over into comedy.[1] 'Both,' says he, 'glide into each other, and become indistinguishable by definition, in the same manner and degree as the individuals in the vegetable or animal kingdoms, which naturalists term the varieties of a species.' Yet however imperceptible the transition may be, Shakespeare's play stands far above all masques, those of Jonson not excepted, and differs from them in essential points. Above all, it is obvious that Shakespeare has transferred the subject from the domain of learned poetry into the popular one, and thus has given it an imperishable and universally attractive substance. Just as he has transformed the vulgar chronicle-histories into truly dramatic plays, so in the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' he has

[1] Halpin, Oberon's Vision in the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream,' illustrated by a Comparison with Lylie's 'Endymion.' Published for the Shakespeare Society, 1843, p. 98 seq.

raised the masque into the highest form of art, as in fact his greatness in general consists in having carried all the existing dramatic species to the highest point of perfection. The difference between learned and popular poetry can nowhere appear more distinct than in comparing the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' with Jonson's masques. B. Jonson also has made Oberon the principal character of a masque;[1] but what a contrast! Here almost all the figures, all the images and allusions, are the exclusive property of the scholar, and can neither be understood by, nor touch a chord of sympathy in the minds of the people. In the very first lines two Virgilian satyrs—Chromis and Mnasil—are introduced, who even to Shakespeare's best audience must have been unknown and unintelligible, and deserved to be hissed off the stage by the groundlings. Hence Jonson found it necessary to furnish his masques with copious notes, which would do honour to a German philologer; whereas Shakespeare never penned a note. Shakespeare in 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream' has by no means effaced the mythological background and the fabulous world of spirits peculiar to the masque, but has taken care to treat it all in an intelligible and charming manner. The scene is placed in Athens, where Shakespeare's public was frequently transposed; among others, in the older 'Taming of the Shrew,' first printed in 1594. Theseus and the Amazon queen were well known to the English from Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale.' Most genuinely national Shakespeare shows himself in the anti-masque; whose clowns are no sylvans, fauns, or cyclops, but English

[1] Oberon, the Fairy Prince, a Masque of Prince Henry's.

tradesmen, such as the poet may have become acquainted with in Stratford and London, such as performed the '*Ludos Coventriæ*' at Coventry. The spirits in the anti-masque are not borrowed from the ancient world of fables, but are creatures of mediæval folklore, with which the English were upon more or less familiar terms. Oberon, 'the dwarfe king of the fayryes,' is the Alberich of the German '*Heldenbuch*,' from which he passed over into 'Huon de Bordeaux,' translated into English by Lord Berners about the year 1588. He became still better known through Robert Greene's play, 'The Scottish Historie of James IV., slaine at Flodden. Entermixed with a pleasant Comedie presented by Oboram, King of Fayeries,' which, it is true, did not appear in print till 1598, but no doubt was written and performed before 1590, as Greene died as early as 1592. Puck or Robin Goodfellow is a universally popular character. According to the 'Mad Pranks and Merry Jests of Robin Goodfellow,' edited by Mr. Collier, he was a son of Oberon by a 'proper young wench.' The story of Pyramus and Thisbe was as well known and as widely circulated since Chaucer's 'Legende of Thisbe of Babylon.' In the year 1562–63 a book entitled 'Perymus and Thesbye' was entered on the Stationers' Register. A few years later (1567) appeared the frequently reprinted translation of Golding's 'Metamorphosis.' Another translation of this tragic love story is contained in the 'Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions' (1578), which was followed by 'A new sonnet of Pyramus and Thisbie,' in 'The Handeful of Pleasant Delites' (1584), and by 'A louely Poem of Pyramus and Thisbe,' appended to

R. Greene's 'Historie of Arbasto, King of Denmarke' (1626). These details are of importance, as they tend to show the art with which Shakespeare transformed the pedantic mythology of the masques into a popular one.

If, then, the similarity between the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' and the masques may be taken for granted, the question arises for what patron and for what festive occasion it may have been written. Tieck, Ulrici, Gerald Massey,[1] and others assume it to be almost self-evident that it was composed for Southampton's wedding. However, there are objections to this supposition which cannot be removed except by the most artificial and daring expedients. Meres' 'Palladis Tamia,' in which the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' is mentioned, was published in 1598, and Southampton's marriage did not take place till the end of that year, probably in November. In order to explain this contradiction Mr. Massey assumes that the play was composed some years earlier, at a time when it was believed that the queen would give her consent to Southampton's marriage; this he conjectures to have taken place in the year 1595. He further believes that the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' was performed in January 1598, before Cecil and Southampton, shortly before their common departure for Paris. At that time (according to Rowland White) there had been a talk of Southampton's marrying Elizabeth Vernon, and possibly, he says, the marriage did take place as early as the spring. Rowland White further relates that on February 14 of the same year a grand entertainment

[1] Shakespeare's Sonnets (London, 1866), p. 66, 481.

took place at Essex House,[1] at which two plays were performed which kept the company awake till one o'clock in the morning. Southampton was not present, as he had not yet returned from France. Mr. Massey would have us believe that the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' was again one of these two plays. It is difficult to believe that Shakespeare should have celebrated Southampton's wedding by a play which had been acted before, and had been known for years. This is, however, but the beginning of a series of difficulties which in the course of our discussion we shall have to mention. Southampton's wedding, according to Mr. Massey's own statement, was not at all suited for a joyous and brilliant fête; for the queen, who sought to prevent the marriages of her favourites, and punished those who married without her consent, seems to have raised even greater difficulties in Southampton's case than in that of others.[2] When therefore Southampton, in the beginning of 1598, started for the Continent, Elizabeth Vernon gave herself up to lamentations and tears. 'His (Southampton's) fair mistress,' writes Rowland White on February 1, 'doth wash her fairest face with too many tears. I pray God his going away bring her to no such infirmity which is as it were hereditary to her name.' On Feb. 12 he writes: 'My Lord Southampton is gone, and has left behind him a very desolate gentlewoman, that has almost wept out her fairest eyes.' It seems,

[1] Essex House, previously Leicester House, had descended from the Earl of Leicester to his step-son, the second Earl of Essex.

[2] At Elizabeth's court, therefore, the beautiful line

'The course of true love never did run smooth'

had an especial meaning, and the bridal pair, in whose honour the play was performed, could not fail to apply the words to themselves.

however, as if the queen's threatening anger and the separation of the lovers had by no means been the only reason of these tears; this at least is hinted at in the following passage from Chamberlain's correspondence, dated August 30, 1598:—'Mistress Vernon is from the Court, and lies at Essex House. Some say she hath taken a venue under her girdle, and swells upon it; yet she complains not of foul play, but says my Lord of Southampton will justify it, and it is bruited underhand that he was lately here four days in great secret, of purpose to marry her, and effected it accordingly.'[1] It would therefore seem that the marriage could not be delayed, and must have taken place in the course of the summer. But whether or not this gossip was founded on fact, this much seems certain, that Southampton came over secretly from the Continent, was clandestinely married to Elizabeth Vernon, and after some days again left her, upon which the queen's anger, which both had foreseen, vented itself with all its force. Is it, in such circumstances, even in the slightest degree probable that the representation of the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream,' or of any other play, should have formed part of the marriage solemnities? How should the necessary preparations have been carried out so promptly and secretly, and how can the wedding-party be supposed to have found pleasure in theatrical amusements?

Besides this, there are allusions in the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' which seem to be completely incompatible with its being composed at so late a date, and which rather force us to fix it much earlier. These

[1] W. B. Devereux, Lives and Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex (London, 1853), i. 491 seq.

allusions, however, can only be seen in their true light if the result of the investigation is forestalled and the corroborating arguments are left to be reviewed afterwards. To state it briefly, all indications point to the fact that the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' was written for and performed at the marriage of the Earl of Essex in the year 1590. This date, which differs from what has hitherto been assumed, may even on account of its earliness excite objection with many critics, but very unjustly so. Mr. Cunningham has made a remark very well worth considering, which comes to our aid in the present case.[1] 'Every newly-discovered fact concerning Shakespeare's plays,' he says, 'proves that he distinguished himself earlier and retired earlier than his commentators and biographers have hitherto been inclined to admit.' Malone, Drake, and Schlegel place our play among Shakespeare's earliest attempts in comedy; Malone assigns it to the year 1594;[2] Drake fixes upon 1593, and would assume 1592 if Shakespeare, in his opinion, had not composed in that year two Parts of Henry VI., and if he was not convinced that not more than two plays ought to be ascribed to the poet in one and the same year. The 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' is evidently the production of that happy period of life when fancy is most lively and unrestrained in its creations; everything in it is lyrical effusion, unclouded cheerfulness, exempt from reflection; in a word, all is youth. This lyrical period Shakespeare had in all probability already passed

[1] Extracts from the Accounts of the Revels at Court, p. 226.

[2] Hallam, Introduction to the Literature of Europe (4th ed.) ii. 179, gives 1592 as the date assigned by Malone. Compare Halliwell's Introduction to Shakespeare's Midsummer-Night's Dream (1841), p. 6.

in 1598. A comparison of the periods of life during which other great geniuses produced their works will show the truth of this assumption.[1] It is a well-known fact that Raphael painted the Sposalizio at the Brera in his twenty-first year, the Entombment in the Borghese Gallery and the Belle Jardinière in his twenty-fourth year, and that in his twenty-fifth he began the Stanzas; Mozart composed his 'Mithridates' as early as his fourteenth year, the 'Idomeneo' at twenty-four, and the 'Entführung aus dem Serail' in his twenty-sixth year. Why should the precocity peculiar to genius not be ascribed to Shakespeare as well? From this point of view we have not the slightest doubt about placing the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' in Shakespeare's twenty-sixth year of age; the inner probability however would certainly have but little weight were it not supported by important external arguments.

It is generally assumed that the Earl of Essex was an early patron of Shakespeare.[2] Born on the 10th of November 1567, he was three years younger than the poet, and an intimate friend of Southampton, whom he somewhat resembled in manners and character; like him he was also a great patron of poets and scholars. He even made attempts at poetry himself, obtained the degree of M.A. from Cambridge, and was subsequently proclaimed Chancellor of that University. That Shakespeare knew the Earl has in so far been placed beyond a doubt, as from the letters of the Earl we gather that the poet borrowed features from the

[1] See above, p. 19 seq.

[2] Devereux, Lives and Letters of the Earls of Essex, i. 193, 503; ii. 194, 196. G. Massey, Shakespeare's Sonnets, p. 462, 464 seqq.

unfortunate Earl's character for the delineation of his Hamlet. It is evident also that Leicester's marriage with Essex's mother, 1578, served as a suggestion and prototype for the Hamlet-tragedy; we recognise Leicester as the model of King Claudius, the Countess of Essex (Lettice Knollys) as the Queen, and Robert Essex as Hamlet. The rebellion of the latter, which cost him his head, was altogether like Hamlet. Shakespeare's tragedy, to our conviction, was certainly anterior to this abortive attempt, and we point to it only on account of the striking agreement of the characters.[1] The graceful compliment which Shakespeare pays the Earl in the prologue to the fifth act of 'Henry V.' is well known. It is therefore scarcely presuming too much to consider the earl's person and his relation to Shakespeare as a sufficient inducement to the latter to celebrate the nuptials of his patron in poetry. A second and no less inciting motive lay in the person of the bride. She was the widow of Sir Philip Sidney, who both as a patron and poet had stood very near to Shakespeare's circle, and had enjoyed the highest esteem and most cordial sympathy in all quarters. What is more likely therefore than that a portion of this sympathy and esteem should have been transferred to his widow, all the more so as by her devoted and heroic behaviour she herself had acquired a most just claim to it?[2] Lady Frances Sidney was the only

[1] G. Massey, Shakespeare's Sonnets, 483 seqq.

[2] George Peele, in his poem 'Polyhymnia,' says :—

> Sidney, at whose name I sigh,
> Because I lack the Sidney that I lov'd,
> And yet I love the Sidneys that survive.

See The Dramatic and Poetical Works of R. Greene and George Peele, ed. by A. Dyce.

child of Sir Francis Walsingham (1536–1590), who, when ambassador in Paris, witnessed the horrors of the night of St. Bartholomew. It was there also that Sidney made his acquaintance, and ever since honoured him as a fatherly friend. Frances, the year of whose birth is as unknown as the year of her death, had enjoyed a careful education, and distinguished herself by a well cultivated taste for literature.[1] Married to Sidney in the year 1583, she bore him a daughter, Elizabeth Sidney, who died childless in 1615 as Lady Rutland.[2] When Sidney in November 1585 was appointed Governor of Vliessingen, his wife accompanied him thither; she also nursed him when he was mortally wounded at Zutphen, and carried him to Arnheim, where he died on the 17th of October, 1586. Thence in all probability she conducted his body home. Shortly after her father's death, April 6th, 1590, she married the Earl of Essex, who had enjoyed the intimate friendship of her first husband. George Peele alludes to this friendship both in his 'Eclogue Gratulatory,' which we shall presently mention more in detail, and in his 'Polyhymnia,' where we read the following lines :—

> Sweet Sidney, fairest shepherd of our green,
> Well-letter'd warrior, whose successor he [viz. Essex]
> In love and arms had ever vow'd to be :
> In love and arms, O, may he so succeed
> As his deserts, as his desires would speed.

As the marriage was celebrated secretly, it seems not to have been entered in the church register, and the birth of the eldest child, Robert, which took place on the 22nd of January, 1591, is the only fact which

[1] Devereux, Lives and Letters, i. 210 seq., ii. 97.
[2] Fox Bourne, A Memoir of Sir Philip Sidney (London, 1862), p. 541.

furnishes us with a clue to its date. Essex was executed in 1601, and in the beginning of 1603 Frances, to the displeasure of her friends, entered upon a third marriage with the Earl of Clanrickarde, a handsome young Irishman, whom Charles I. created Duke of St. Albans, and who expired in 1635. The Earl of Clanrickarde possessed some resemblance to Essex, so that even Queen Elizabeth conceived a passing affection for him.[1]

It might seem as if the secrecy of this marriage, as in Southampton's case, was opposed to the supposition of a theatrical representation. But *duo si faciunt idem, non est idem.* Essex did not, like Southampton, come stealthily over from the Continent, and take his departure immediately after the celebration of his marriage. His 'fairest mistress' had had no cause to weep out her lovely eyes; on the contrary, there existed in the present case both inclination and wish for a joyous festival. A man of Essex's position, whom the people, in consideration of his descent from Edward III., and his relationship to Elizabeth (his mother, Lady Knollys, and Elizabeth were cousins), were inclined to regard as a prince, nay, who in their opinion, perhaps, had a better claim to the throne than Elizabeth herself—such a man, who moreover loved pomp and splendour, could not possibly have celebrated his wedding without song and music.[2] Private theatricals were so common in Essex House that they could excite no suspicion, and the secrecy of their marriage was only of consequence

[1] Devereux, Lives and Letters, ii. 197, 204.

[2] The marriage of his son (the third earl) was also solemnised with extraordinary splendour at Whitehall, in January 1606; Jonson wrote his 'Beautiful Masque and Barriers' for the occasion.

to the young couple, till they could meet the queen with the *fait accompli*. The whole thing could very well have been so arranged that the queen would only have been informed of the main fact when her veto would be too late.

He who is acquainted with the half-mythological half-allegorical style of the masques, will not be surprised that we consider Theseus and Hippolyta as the representatives of the bridal couple itself. Like Theseus, the bridegroom, in spite of his youth, was a captain, and doubtless a huntsman as well; whether he—certainly in a different sense from Theseus—had won his bride by his sword, could only be intelligible to the initiated. As a youth of seventeen he had followed his step-father Leicester into the Netherlands, at the head of a troop of cavalry which he had himself raised and equipped in a most extravagant manner; at Zutphen, in 1586, he so distinguished himself that Leicester knighted him. Two years later he was appointed general in the army raised to oppose the Armada, and soon after this—without the queen's permission—he took part in the campaign against Spain, in order to recover the crown of Portugal for Don Antonio. What Theseus says in the first scene of the fifth act—

> Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
> To greet me with premeditated welcomes, &c.—

literally applies to Essex, to whom George Peele dedicated his 'Eclogue Gratulatory'[1] upon his return from the Spanish campaign (1589, shortly before his marriage). No more appropriate designation than that of

[1] The Dramatic and Poetical Works of R. Greene and George Peele, ed. by A. Dyce, p. 335 and 561 seqq.

a 'great clerk' could have been chosen for the author of this eulogistic poem, which is composed in the learned style, and whose almost every stanza ends with the exclamation *'Io, io pæan!'* A further resemblance between Essex and Theseus is to be found in another and more peaceful sphere—that of love. Like Theseus he courted many an 'Aeglé and Perigenia,' and then left them. The blame of this faithlessness is expressly put on Titania's shoulders by the poet. Elizabeth's maids of honour could tell tales of Essex both before and after his marriage; one of them, Mrs. Southwell, bore him a son, Walter Devereux, and Lady Bacon was in so far right when, in a letter to Essex's mother, she complained about 'thy Earl's unchaste manner of life.'[1]

After what we have said about Lady Sidney's conduct during the war in the Netherlands, we shall scarcely be mistaken in conceiving her a strong, heroic woman, like Hippolyta—in a good sense—who in merry days delighted in the chase and in the barking of hounds, like the Amazon queen.[2] How far the lines in the first scene of the second act—

> But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
> Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
> To Theseus must be wedded—

were appropriate allusions or waggishly exaggerated fun can never be decided. Such subordinate features in

[1] Devereux, Lives and Letters, i. 475 seqq., ii. 205.

[2] Lady Sydney is evidently alluded to in the following passage of Peele's 'Eclogue Gratulatory':—

> He's (Essex) a great herdgroom, certes, but no swain,
> Save hers that is the flower of Phœbe's plain.

the picture—however valuable and welcome—cannot have a decisive weight when the matter lies between the acceptation or the rejection of an hypothesis as a whole. A similar feature of this kind is the question—which we conceive merely as a possibility—whether two of Essex's servants or officers did not enter upon their marriage at the same time as their master, so that the triple wedding in the play would have exactly corresponded to what actually took place. It does not even seem unlikely that the statements made in I. 1, and III. 1, about the moonshine may have coincided with reality; they are, it is true, not very definite.

The most celebrated personal allusion in the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' is the well-known allegory commonly entitled 'Oberon's Vision,' which by its transcendent beauty throws all other allegories contained in the whole compass of masques completely into the shade. After several previous attempts at explanation, especially that of James Boaden, had paved the way, A. J. Halpin's learned and ingenious combination has, we think, established the fact that this allegory refers to the so-called Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth, where Leicester made a last attempt to win Elizabeth's hand. Halpin proves that the Moon is meant to represent the queen, who was frequently allegorised as Cynthia; the Earth, the Countess of Sheffield; the Little Western Flower, the Countess of Essex (Lettice Knollys), the mother of our Essex; and Cupid, the Earl of Leicester. It is very remarkable that the same allegories occur in Lyly's 'Endymion,' where Elizabeth appears as 'Cynthia,' the Countess of

Sheffield as 'Tellus,' Lettice Essex as 'Floscula,' and Leicester as 'Endymion.'[1] 'The Mermaid on a Dolphin's back,' and 'the stars madly shooting from their spheres,' allude to the pageants and fireworks at Kenilworth; the mermaid is mentioned in almost the poet's own words by Gascoigne, Laneham, and Dugdale. Oberon's remark that he saw what Puck could not see, is referred to the circumstance that Shakespeare, through his connection with the Arden family, received information of secret proceedings which caused the failure of Leicester's designs upon the queen. For Elizabeth, according to all appearances, here received intelligence of Leicester's secret, or at least his pretended, marriage with Lady Sheffield, and it was Edward Arden through whom this secret was revealed. In any case the latter excited Leicester's anger by the fact that he not only refused to wear the Earl's livery during the queen's visit, but even ventured to reproach him on account of his 'private accesses' to the Countess of Essex. Arden, as is well known, was executed in 1583 at Leicester's instigation. All this is so plausible, and is supported with such cogent arguments by Halpin, that scarcely an objection can be raised against it. There remains but one point upon which the learned commentator has thrown no light, namely, what was the poet's reason and motive for weaving this old and forgotten story into his play.

[1] It is not at all unlikely that Lyly's 'Endymion' likewise has reference to Essex's marriage. The festivities perhaps extended over several days, in which sense Theseus' words, 'a fortnight hold we this solemnity,' may be interpreted. It frequently occurred that several masques were performed at one marriage, as for example at the marriage of the Elector Palatine. The 'Endymion' was published in 1591, but, according to Halpin's conjecture, was written and performed at an earlier date.

Elizabeth's visit to Kenilworth took place in the year 1575; had the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' really been composed for Southampton's marriage, there would have been a period of no less than twenty-three years between the two occurrences. What interest could Southampton—who was born but two years before the Princely Pleasures—have taken in these events? Who in fact could have taken any interest in them except the families concerned, above all the Essex family? The whole allegory, according to our conviction, only obtains its true explanation and significance, if the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' was the play performed at Essex's wedding.

Everything well considered, it will scarcely be denied that, in the strange love intrigues in the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream,' Shakespeare has mirrored the love affairs of the aristocracy. The object of his poetry was, as he himself has stated it in 'Hamlet,' to hold up the mirror to nature. The complication of the loves of Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia, and Helena, as well as Titania's inexplicable passion for the ass-headed Bottom, doubtless had the greatest analogy to the love affairs at Court, in which the families of Leicester, Essex, and Sidney played the most prominent parts. These families, as in their whole social position, so especially in regard to their love affairs, considered themselves as a privileged caste, who, regardless of the restraints and conventionalities of ordinary life, might give free reins to all their whims and inclinations. In proof of this we need only refer to Essex's sister, Lady Penelope Rich, of 'whose unchaste manner of life' Lady Bacon would have had still more reason to com-

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plain than of her brother's. All the ladies of these families were beautiful, gifted, and passionate. Even the more virtuous among them were not satisfied with less than two or three marriages. The queen's flirtations were certainly no very edifying example.

Now, from this point of view the love affairs at Kenilworth form an almost indispensable link in the chain. They were too important a turning-point in the fortunes of the Essex family for the poet to leave them unnoticed. But Shakespeare does not mention the occurrence at random; with the subtlest device he introduces it for the attainment of a definite object. The compliment paid to the queen on this opportunity that she alone has come forth out of the general confusion 'in maiden meditation fancy free,' is anything but unintentional.[1] Shakespeare was no flatterer, and even the pleasing gracefulness and poetic beauty of this homage would have scarcely tempted him, had he not meant to render his patron Essex a service by flattering the queen. His intention was that this compliment, like a drop of the otto of roses, should pacify the queen, and dispose her favourably to the Earl's marriage. In this he only followed Sidney, who in his masque 'The Lady of May,' had made use of a similar device to obtain Elizabeth's consent to a marriage. The fact of the queen not having been present at the performance does not alter the case; the poet was

[1] The following beautiful lines also contain certainly some personal allusion:

> Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood
> To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
> But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
> Than that which withering on the virgin thorn
> Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

certain that she would receive an account of his compliment as well as of all the rest. The result has indeed shown that he did but partially succeed with the disagreeable old virago; Essex came off as it were with a black eye, perhaps in consequence of this very line. He was not, like Southampton and others, sent to prison, only his young wife was ordered 'to live quite retired in her mother's house.'[1]

Now, however, we meet with a difficulty. It will probably be admitted that the allusion to the festival at Kenilworth was of interest to the Essex family and to them alone; but the reply will be that it was a very painful interest to recall the guilty life of the bridegroom's mother. Will not such an allusion be justly described as wanting in tact on the part of the poet, nay, simply as a blunder? We think not, and believe that the erroneousness of such an objection can be shown without any great difficulty. First, let us in a few words establish the facts. Lettice Knollys, born in 1540, was married in 1561 or 1562, to Walter Devereux, who was her junior by a year, and subsequently became the first Earl of Essex. In the years 1575–76 her husband, partly through the influence of Leicester, was absent for some length of time as Governor of Ulster and Earl Marshal of Ireland, while the Countess remained at home, and according to popular rumour entered into an equivocal relation with Leicester. On the 22nd of September, 1576, he died at Dublin, after twenty days' illness. People talked of poison, and pointed to Leicester as the instigator of the pretended crime. The Elizabethan period was in general

[1] Oberon's Vision, p. 63 note; p. 99.

very apt to be suspicious in regard to poison, and so credulous in this respect that it was once believed that the queen's saddle had been poisoned in order to despatch her. The fact that Lady Essex, a few days after her husband's death—like Gertrude in 'Hamlet'—was secretly married to Leicester, must of course have added fuel to these reports; the wedded couple, however, paid no attention to them, and even knew how to meet the queen's anger. On the 4th of September, 1588, Leicester died suddenly, and, as report said, likewise by poison: people regarded his death as a just punishment for his having, as they believed, poisoned others. Lettice, now forty-nine years of age, in the following July married her groom Sir Christopher Blount, who was not only her inferior in rank, but did not even stand high in reputation. Lettice survived also her third husband, who took part in her son's rebellion and was executed. After enjoying an unimpaired health of body and mind to an extreme old age, she died on Christmas morning, 1634, at the age of ninety-four, and was buried by the side of her second husband in St. Mary's Church, Warwick.

That Walter Essex did not die of poison, but of dysentery, is now proved;[1] consequently the suspicion that his wife had a hand in his death, falls to the ground. It is also questionable whether, during his life-time, she actually kept up a criminal intercourse with Leicester, so that her fault would be confined simply to her over-hasty marriage with the latter. Devereux not unjustly maintains that Lettice's father, the strict old Puritan, who kept her continually under

[1] Devereux, Life and Letters, i. 132; 146; 158 seqq.

his eye, would not have tolerated such a love affair; it was to satisfy his demand that his daughter's clandestine marriage with Leicester had to be proclaimed before witnesses in 1578. Devereux also directs attention to the fact that Leicester, who certainly had criminal intentions in regard to Lady Essex, would hardly have married her had he been able to attain his object in another way. It is true that Lettice, after she had become Leicester's wife, was never again allowed to appear at Court, and that Elizabeth after many entreaties only once consented to meet her elsewhere (1598). This displeasure on the queen's part however, is by no means a sufficient proof of Lettice's guilt, but can very well be explained by Elizabeth's jealousy, which may have been increased by slander and intrigues. Moreover it speaks in Lettice's favour that she continued on good terms with her son by her first marriage; he was from the first and ever afterwards her 'sweet Robino,' and sided with her against the queen. In one of his letters (probably of the year 1587) he writes: 'From thence, she (viz. Elizabeth) came to speak bitterly against my mother, which because I could not endure to see me and my house disgraced (the only matter which both her choler and the practice of mine enemies had to work upon) I told her,' &c.

This sufficiently proves that the allusion to the 'little western flower' could have given no offence to the family, least of all in the delicate and truly poetical words in which the poet has couched it. The expression, that the flower which before was milk-white became 'purple with love's wound,' cannot have referred to the rumours about her husband's death, because he did not

die a bloody death. The flower which maidens call 'Love-in-idleness' is the '*viola tricolor*' of botanists; whether there exists a '*viola purpurea*' we know not, but according to Halpin there certainly is a '*viola lactea.*' Shakespeare does not even drop the slightest hint of Lettice's guilt, on the contrary he makes the love affairs of mortals appear as the results of events occurring in the land of spirits, as the consequences of roguish charms. There is as little question about guilt in this privileged aristocracy as among the fairies themselves. What could the little western flower do if Oberon laid a juice on her eyelid that filled her with a maddening love? How could she resist the 'love-shaft' which struck her 'as it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts?' Why had her husband left her heart unoccupied, and made her a 'love-in-idleness?' Might she not just as well have accompanied him to Ireland as Lady Sidney followed hers to Holland? If blame was to fall on anyone, it was upon the Earl of Leicester, who was dead at the time of Essex's marriage, and therefore did not require any particular delicacy at the poet's hands. Shakespeare represents all these intricacies of love as the dreams and visions of an oppressive midsummer's night; Essex's marriage is the joyful awakening and the happy ending. Who will venture to say whether, apart from all this, the poet did not find in the death of his relative, who had fallen an innocent victim to these love affairs, a personal incitement to shake off these troubles from his mind by bringing them, as it were, to a poetic close?

We must, moreover, not forget to allow to the poet that freedom of viewing things, which in these matters

prevailed at the Court of Elizabeth in an incomparably higher degree than at that of Victoria. The Elizabethan stage in particular enjoyed far greater privileges, even in regard to the sovereign, than are now-a-days admissible. Halpin has adduced such striking examples of this freedom as to remove all doubts;[1] examples in comparison with which Oberon's vision is extremely moderate and delicate. It was only when the liberty of the stage went too far, or when the increasing Puritanical influences could not be resisted, that attempts were made to check such allusions, as it is proved by a case communicated by F. von Raumer.[2] This was a complaint made in April 1608 by the French ambassador to forbid the representation of Chapman's 'Duke of Biron,' and to punish the actors, because the queen of France appeared in this play, and gave Mademoiselle de Verneuil a box on the ear. A few days before, James I. had been personated on the stage, and had scarcely paid any attention to the circumstance. Under such circumstances it seems obvious that Shakespeare's allusion to the love affairs of the mother of the Earl of Essex, at his marriage, is a perfectly unobjectionable supposition. The poet, nevertheless, at the end of the play does not forget to bring forward an excuse in case that, contrary to his expectation, one should be needed. Puck in the concluding speech says :—

> If we shadows have offended
> Think but this, and all is mended,
> That you have but slumber'd here
> While these visions did appear.

[1] Oberon's Vision, 101 seqq.

[2] Briefe aus Paris zur Erläuterung der Geschichte des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts, ii. 276 seq.

> And this weak and idle theme,
> No more yielding but a dream,
> Gentles, do not reprehend :
> If you pardon, we will mend.

These lines would be flat and meaningless if they had not been spoken at Essex's wedding. The pardon asked for will certainly have been granted the more readily, as it could scarcely have escaped those interested in the play that, as we have shown, the object of the passage in question was to put in a good word for them with the queen.

We have said that in the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' the love affairs of the aristocracy are represented as in a mirror. This will be understood in its full significance when we take the anti-masque into consideration. While the aristocracy make love partly a frivolous amusement in idleness, partly a sensual caprice, the lower classes on the contrary regard it from its tragic side. The 'hempen homespuns' know of no other theme for their masque than the melancholy story of 'Pyramus and Thisbe;' with them love is bitter earnest; they know its pathos only, although or perhaps because, they do not understand it. How deeply this tragic conception of love is rooted in the minds of the people is proved by innumerable popular songs and ballads of all nations. We here confront the question as to the fundamental idea of the play, but cannot enter on it, as our task has nothing to do with what Shakespeare—like every true poet—has expressed unconsciously in his poetry; we only speak of what he has consciously put into it. Only this much may be said, that we nearly agree with A. Peters, who has demonstrated the 'transition both from the actually tragic in-

fidelity in the principal play, and from the tragic fidelity in the counter-play into the comic,' to be the fundamental idea of 'A Midsummer-Night's Dream.'[1] That the contrast between the views of love and life in the aristocracy and in the working classes was intentional, cannot be mistaken; the poet refers the one party to the other, and though he is no lecturer on morals, he yet makes us perceive that each party may learn from the other. Both their views are wrong in their one-sidedness, their mutual penetration alone results in what is right. The tragic conception of love—standing as it does in contrast to the education and social position of its representatives—in their hard hands and thick skulls produces an involuntary comic effect, and serves for the amusement of the aristocracy. But the mechanics are likewise influenced by the lighter atmosphere of life and love in the Duke's palace, and they go home contented. All at last resolves itself into a deeply poetical and delightful play, satisfying all hearts.

Before we conclude, we have still to consider two more passages in the play, which have been made use of for determining the date of its origin. The first is that speech of Titania's in which she describes the effects of her quarrel with Oberon upon nature, particularly upon the state of the weather :—

> And never, since the middle summer's spring,
> Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead, &c.

In a MS. of the astrologer, Dr. Simon Forman, Mr. Halliwell has discovered a meteorological account of the year 1591, which bears a close resemblance

[1] Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Pädagogik, 1866, Bd. 94, Heft I., S. 20–29.

to this passage, and is moreover fully borne out by Stowe in his Chronicle. Mr. Halliwell therefore concludes that the abnormal summer of that year must have been present to the poet's mind, and accordingly fixes the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' in the autumn of 1594.[1] But this argumentation is very deceptive, for cold summers, great inundations, and mild winters (which is the whole extent of the abnormal state of the weather), are by no means of rare occurrence. Dyce is of quite different opinion, and dismisses the whole supposition as 'ridiculous.' Even if we were inclined to assent to Mr. Halliwell's arguments, there would still remain another means of bringing his conjecture in unison with ours, namely to regard the passage as a subsequent interpolation. To this method of explanation Mr. Halliwell himself resorts in reference to the second passage which is here to be considered, viz., the well-known lines :—

> The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
> Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary.

Mr. Halliwell points out that three of the proposals made by the Athenian chamberlain agree with the story and costume of the play, but that this fourth, if taken for a contemporaneous allusion, would not be in keeping. Hence he concludes that either the mourning of the muses for the death of Learning is not intended to be an allusion to any definite person,—and this is also Dyce's opinion, who again denounces the opposite as 'ridiculous'—or that the lines if really referring to Spenser's death (Jan. 16th, 1599), must be considered

[1] Introduction, p. 6 seq., 59.

a later insertion. It is an old story that learning is doomed to starve; the old epigram says :—

Sed vacuos loculos pauper Homerus habet.

We might therefore easily agree with the opinion first set forth by Mr. Halliwell. However, in spite of the curse of ridicule which Dyce has laid upon any attempt to the contrary, we are more inclined to see a personal allusion in the lines; an allusion moreover, which strikingly serves to strengthen our hypothesis. In all probability the passage refers to Spenser, and was subsequently added as an additional compliment to Essex. It is well known that Spenser was buried at Essex's expense, and that Essex sent the poet, who was lying on his deathbed, twenty gold pieces, which the latter, according to B. Jonson's account, refused, with the words, that he had no more time to spend them. That this generous help, in spite of its coming too late, was regarded by public opinion as greatly redounding to the Earl's honour, is proved by Lane's 'Triton's Trumpet,' of which Mr. Halliwell gives the following extract :—

Yon (viz. in England) they from my deere Spencer stood alooff,
When verbale drones of virtuous merit scant
Suffred that gentile poet die of want ;
One onelie knowinge generositie,
And findinge he would crave for modestie,
Him sent in greatest sicknes, crownes good store,
So Robert Essex did (honors decore)
Nathles of pininge grief, and wantes decaie,
Hee much thoncke that slowt Earle, that thus gann saie,
The medicine comes too late to the pacient,
Tho died.

Other commentators refer the perplexing lines to Spenser's poem 'The Tears of the Muses' (On the neg-

lect and contempt of Learning), which appeared in 1591. Even this would not upset our supposition, for in all probability this poem of Spenser, like so many others, had been circulated for some time in MS. before it appeared in print; so that both Shakespeare and Essex might very well have known it as early as 1590. Knight's conjecture however, that the lines might allude to Greene, who died on September 3rd 1592 in abject poverty, must be decidedly rejected. Not only was Greene too insignificant for such a posthumous encomium, but Shakespeare would have sullied his pure and delicate poetry had he sought to claim the sympathy of his audience for a man who by disgraceful excesses and immorality had brought his misery upon himself. If the passage contains any allusion at all, in our opinion it can only refer to Spenser's death ; in both cases—whether there be an allusion or not—it does not affect our combination.

Thus from whatever side we may view the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream,' and whatever points we may take into consideration, everything agrees with the supposition that it was written in the spring of the year 1590, for the wedding of the Earl of Essex with Lady Sidney. A more select audience than were assembled on that occasion the poet could not have desired, and the bridal party, their relatives and guests, on their part, could not have enjoyed a lovelier and more charming poem. At all events their judgment must have sounded very different from that of Samuel Pepys—President of the Royal Society (!)—who, on the 29th of September, 1662, made the following entry in his diary: 'To the King's Theatre, where we saw "Midsummer-Night's

Dream,' which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid ridiculous play, that I ever saw in my life.'

(1874.)

As might have been expected, our assigning the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' to the year 1590 has met with opposition in several quarters; and Ulrici, in the latest edition of his work,[1] replies that no one will agree with it 'who knows how to appreciate the beauties of the "Midsummer-Night's Dream," and has a delicate feeling for the differences of language, of versification, of composition, and of the leading motives of a poem.' The play, he thinks, cannot possibly be classed with Shakespeare's oldest comedies, with the 'Comedy of Errors,' the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' &c. This, however, has by no means been done or intended, as these plays must of course be assigned to the second half of the eighth decade. Ulrici himself cannot help characterising the feeling for style—which he seems to claim as his exclusive possession—as 'unsafe ground;' nothing in this respect argues more eloquently against him than the anecdote which he himself relates (iii. 65) about Michael Angelo's buried Cupid, which was universally considered an antique masterpiece till Michael Angelo proved himself to be the sculptor by producing the arm which he had broken off it before burying. When therefore Ulrici himself points out how slight is the reliance to be placed on the feeling for style, how can he attach such an unjustifiable importance

[1] Shakspeare's Dramatische Kunst, II., 287 seq.

to it in this case? The year 1590 is by no means the earliest date that has been assigned to the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream'; Halpin[1] has even maintained that it must have been written before 1588, because Leicester died in that year. Ulrici, to be sure, rejects the allegorical explanation on which Halpin has bestowed so much ingenuity and learning; nay, he will not even admit that the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' was written for the celebration of any marriage, no matter which. He asserts the contents of the play to be unsuitable for such an occasion, whereas he by no means looks upon the plot of 'Henry VIII.' (the history of a divorce!) as inappropriate for a marriage poem; but is convinced that 'Henry VIII.' was composed for and performed at the marriage of the Count Palatine (1613). This, after all, turns upon a question of individual taste, concerning which we cannot argue.

My hypothesis, however, has also met with assent and most welcome support. In an exhaustive and ingenious essay in the '*Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, (iv. 268–307), the late lamented Hermann Kurz has shown by a well-connected series of arguments that he who will not accept the Essex theory, as he calls it, only involves himself in still greater difficulties. The lines,

> The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
> Of Learning, late deceased in beggary,

he refers to Spenser's 'Tears of the Muses,' but has not succeeded in clearing away all difficulties on this head. With greater probability he proves from the Sidney Papers that the entertainment which Sir Robert Sid-

[1] Oberon's Vision, 87.

ney, then Governor of Vliessingen, attended, much to the queen's displeasure, was no other than the very entertainment given on the occasion of the marriage of Essex. Kurz, in one point, has given a very plausible turn to my hypothesis, with which I entirely agree. He thinks that the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' was not represented on the marriage-day itself, but on the May Day festival which followed close afterwards. To this the contents of the play unquestionably point, and the newly-married lady, who was mourning the loss of her father, need not have assisted at this festivity, so that the allusion to Theseus' former lady-loves loses the objectionable character which it might have possessed in the presence of the bride. 'The wedding of Essex,' says Kurz, 'must have taken place either before the 6th of April—the day which deprived the bride of her father—or soon after that day on which she lost a support so hard to dispense with. In the latter case her unprotected state would have justified a step which, according to our ideas, was wanting in delicacy, though the English aristocracy of the time, as we know, could be pretty heroic in matters of this kind. Probably, however, it was just Walsingham's decease that accelerated the marriage. Queen Elizabeth, in her gracious kindness, need only have taken the orphaned widow to Court from her mother's arms to have frustrated the plans of the couple, or, if they had been carried out notwithstanding, the offenders would, to her ideas of right, have become doubly culpable. There is no doubt that the wedding itself took place quite privately, but even the after-celebration required some caution, and no fitter day could be chosen for it, in order to lull all

suspicion, than May Day, which for centuries had been celebrated, in town and country, as one of the greatest festivals of the year; and May Day was as near at hand as could be wished.'

Kurz has found another and extremely remarkable corroboration of the date thus obtained. The hint which I threw out in regard to the moonlight induced him to examine the old Ephemerides (Cypr. Leoviticus, Mart. Everart, Leyden, and others), which all agree in stating that on April 30, 1590, there was new moon. What an unexpected significance is thereby imparted to the introductory lines :—

> Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
> Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
> Another moon; but, O, methinks, how slow
> This old moon wanes!

'Such an observer as Shakespeare,' continues Kurz, 'certainly knew that the delicate crescent, considering its vernal position, might again become visible on the evening of May Day; as moreover his description of its form perfectly agrees with the season, we may perhaps even interpret Hippolyta's words literally :—

> Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
> Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
> And then the moon, like to a silver bow
> New bent in heaven, shall behold the night
> Of our solemnities.

'This supposition would have still greater weight had the play been performed in the open air, for which it is indeed temptingly suited, but in the existing circumstances this would perhaps have been too public; and besides, Bottom's words, "Why, then you may leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we

play, open," seem to prove a representation within four walls.'

Kurz justly considers it to be especially deserving of notice that, by means of the Essex hypothesis, we now for the first time obtain a clue to explain how it was that Shakespeare won the patronage of the Earls of Essex and Southampton; in fact, how it was that he came into contact with the aristocracy. 'The early patronage of the Earl of Essex which Shakespeare is said to have enjoyed,' says Kurz, 'is one of those points in his life which are still unproved. If we consult the ordinary course of events it would seem probable that the commission to provide and represent the festive play was given to Burbage and his company, and that it was transferred by them to their "factotum," who was not yet well known to the great public. How far the actors were let into the secret is uncertain, but their position as servants insured their silence. Now the performance, which so far exceeded all demands and expectations, must have necessarily drawn the attention of Essex to the poet; and thus for the first time we gain a well-founded supposition as to how the latter was introduced to him. The Earl of three-and-twenty years and the poet of six-and-twenty (they lived and matured rapidly in those days) must have become intimate as soon as they had come into personal contact with each other; Shakespeare, with the inexhaustible richness and gracefulness of his mind, Essex, with his captivating condescension, with which he drew those beneath him up to himself, and with his character so full of contradictions, which might at one and the same time form a study for the character of a Hotspur and of

a Hamlet. It is now beyond all doubt whose recommendation it was that introduced the poet, three years afterwards, to young Southampton.'

'Thus,' says Kurz, 'all things dove-tail one into another to confirm the hypothesis,' the probability of which has so impressed him that he considers it 'tantamount to a fact that the "Midsummer-Night's Dream" was first performed at an entertainment given at the celebration of Essex's marriage, in conjunction with the May Day festival of 1590.'

'THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.'

(1871.)

It might be supposed that critics would long since have come to a unanimous and generally recognised æsthetic estimate of such a much-read play as 'The Merchant of Venice,' standing as it does on the *repertoire* of almost every stage; however, the conceptions of the fundamental idea, the opinions concerning the composition, and the criticisms of the characters differ here more widely than in the case of most of the other works of our poet. Each reader enjoys and admires the splendid poetry, but each one understands and interprets it in his own way. This unquestionably shows how right Gervinus is, in finding a proof of the wealth and the manysidedness of Shakespeare's works to lie in the variety of the points of view from which they may be regarded, as it is not without a certain degree and appearance of correctness that several opinions on one and the same play may be formed. According to Horn, 'The Merchant of Venice' is based upon a 'truly grand, profound, extremely delightful, nay an almost blessed idea, upon a purely Christian, conciliatory love, and upon mediating mercy as opposed to the law, and to what is called right.' Ulrici finds the ideal unity in the saying, *summum jus summa injuria*, and Rötscher modifies this view in so far that he considers

the innermost spirit of the play evidently to be the dialectics of abstract right. He goes on to say: 'By the expression, dialectics of abstract right, we mean, that development by which abstract right by itself, that is, by its own nature, discovers its own worthlessness, consequently destroys itself where it seeks to govern human life and to assert itself as an absolute power. Abstract right is the right of the letter, the rigid expression of the law which endeavours to assert itself as the sole power, to the exclusion of all other elements of life, and thereby becomes the greatest wrong to the moral mind.' In opposition to these three closely allied conceptions, according to which the centre of gravity of the play lies in Portia's address to Mercy, Gervinus maintains that in 'The Merchant of Venice' the poet wished to delineate man's relation to property. He says, 'to prove man's relation to property, to money, is to weigh his inner value by a most subtle balance, and to separate that which clings to unessential and external things from that which in its inner nature places itself in relation to a higher destiny.' He thinks that according to Shakespeare, money, the god of the world, is the symbol of appearance and of everything external. To this Hebler,[1] while also believing the fundamental idea of the piece to lie in the struggle against appearance, adds, that it is, however, by no means only represented symbolically, but in a very plastic and classical manner. The caskets, according to him, are symbols of appearance in general, and

[1] Shakespeare's Kaufmann von Venedig. Ein Versuch über die sogenannte Idee dieser Komödie. Von R. A. C. Hebler. Bern, 1854. S. 42, seq. 110.

especially of that appearance which envelops human worth and worthlessness. The true nature which lies hidden beneath appearances is in the end everywhere victorious. According to this conception, Bassanio's speech, when selecting the casket, contains the key to the poem, and it cannot be denied that it possesses as great a claim to this distinction as Portia's apotheosis of Mercy. Kreyssig, lastly, admits the impossibility of comprising the numerous diverse and to some extent opposite elements of the play under one fundamental idea. He shows that in Shakespeare's lighter dramas the most heterogeneous elements contribute towards the effect of unity, and that it is important to recognise the common law in the various contrasting phenomena, but not to construct this law out of a single symptom. According to him, we should have to choose a higher and freer stand-point than that of a moral simply to be exemplified by the play. If there be any one essential, ever-recurring, and definite point in the life unfolded in our play, he thinks it is this, that lasting prosperity, sure and practical success, can only be attained by moderation in all things, by the skilful employment and the cheerful endurance of given circumstances, equally removed from defiant opposition and cowardly submission. This would, however, again amount to a moral, though of a somewhat looser form. 'Strong feeling, together with clear and sure reasoning,' says Kreyssig at the end of his lecture, 'balance each other in the character pervading the whole. Fortune favours the righteous provided they boldly and cleverly seek to win her favour; but rigid idealism, even although infinitely more amiable and worthy of respect,

shows itself scarcely less dangerous than hardened selfishness.'

Kreyssig has here made a remark very deserving of consideration, inasmuch as this play, above all others, most distinctly shows that any one proposition, or any one formula, be it moral, legal, philosophical, or what it may, is not sufficient for a complete and satisfactory explanation of a poetical work. The problem can never be fully solved, because the poet does not start from definitions, but from perceptions. In fact almost all the critics mentioned have felt it necessary, in 'The Merchant of Venice,' to assume the existence of a secondary as well as of a primary idea. Ulrici says that if the leading thought, the fundamental motive of the poem, be traced to its source and origin, it might be said that the poem hinges upon the great and general contrast between appearance and reality, between deceptive and plausible form and true substance. Gervinus thinks that the relation of external possession to friendship takes the most prominent place in the play, so that it might as well be called a song of true friendship, whereas 'Timon of Athens' is at the same time a history of extravagance and of false friendship. Simrock also calls 'The Merchant of Venice' a 'true codex of friendship in all its stages.'[1] Hebler (82) considers that the play is so rich, and that moreover it characterises man's relation to sexual love so variously and amply, that among other things it might very well be called a song of Love. In another passage the inscription on the leaden casket makes him inclined to believe that the idea of the play (which, he says, un-

[1] Quellen des Shakespeare, 2 Auflage, I. 215.

questionably does also exist in it) is, that man must make sacrifices in some way or other, if not willingly, then by compulsion. Thus we see how the supposed fundamental idea must everywhere be extended, enlarged, and remodelled so as appropriately to suit the play.

Under these circumstances it is surely worth while to try whether the motives which led Shakespeare to his subject, and whether the leading idea which he wished poetically to shape, cannot be discovered more readily by another road. As has frequently been remarked, it was not the story so much as the characters which were the chief attraction to Shakespeare. The psychological development and delineation of character possessed a peculiar charm for him, and in it lies his greatest power and skill, whereas the tale occupies a comparatively subordinate place. He is the creator of character, the character poet *par excellence*. It is even not improbable that the desire to show his superior skill in drawing characters was one of the principal reasons which induced him to remodel older plays, a point which, among others, has been discussed by Delius in reference to 'Timon of Athens.'[1] The short argument which Stephen Gosson gives of the plot of an older play, 'The Jew,' in 'The School of Abuse,' 1579, namely, that it represented 'the greediness of worldly chusers and bloody minds of usurers,' according to Gervinus leaves scarcely a doubt but that that play made use of the combined stories of Portia's lovers and of the usurer Shylock; so that Shakespeare had an

[1] Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, ii. 339, 352; iii. 182.

older play before him to work upon, and that most likely it was the character of the usurer contained in it which invited him to write his play. This hypothesis however is too vague for us to attach any importance to it; fortunately there is no need for it, as it requires no such conjecture to find out the prototype of Shylock, which clearly lies in Marlowe's 'Jew of Malta,' without which 'The Merchant of Venice' would in all probability never have been written. It is strange that as far as we know no German commentator has yet compared Marlowe's tragedy, and that English critics deny, or at all events do not sufficiently apprize, the relations existing between the two plays. In Hallam's eyes Marlowe's Barabas is unworthy to be regarded as the prototype of Shylock, though the 'Jew of Malta' may possibly have furnished Shakespeare with a few hints.[1] Dyce despatches the subject with equal brevity. He admits, indeed, that Shakespeare was intimately acquainted with Marlowe's play, 'but,' he continues, 'no one who has carefully compared the character of Barabas with that of Shylock will allow that he received more than unimportant hints from it.' The collection of so-called parallel passages from both plays in the appendix of Waldron's edition and continuation of Jonson's 'Sad Shepherd,' he says, proves nothing.[2]

Let us see what is meant by the 'few and unimportant hints.' That we cannot expect any of Marlowe's characters to be in any way comparable to those of Shakespeare is self-evident from what has just been

[1] Introd. Lit. Eur. (1854) ii. 170.

[2] The Works of Chr. Marlowe, ed. by Al. Dyce (London, 1862), p. 24.—Unfortunately I cannot from my own knowledge judge of this catalogue of parallel passages.

said. The plot of the 'Jew of Malta,' in so far as it concerns us, is briefly this. When the Turks appear before Malta, forcibly to collect the tribute which is ten years in arrears, Ferneze, the governor of the island, applies to the Jews in order to extort the exorbitant sum from them; for, says he to them—

> through our sufferance of your hateful lives,
> Who stand accursèd in the sight of heaven,
> These taxes and afflictions are befall'n.

At the head of the Jewish community stands the immensely rich usurer Barabas, whose heavily laden ships have just returned from all the quarters of the globe. In his house are enormous stores full of wine, spices, and uncoined gold; besides this he has hoarded up immense quantities of precious stones and pearls.[1] A single one of his diamonds is sufficient—

> in peril of calamity
> To ransom great kings from captivity.

It therefore surpasses in value even the turquoise which Shylock has received from his Leah, and the precious stone which he has bought at Frankfort for two thousand ducats. Just as Shylock, quoting from the Old Testament, declares riches to be a blessing if

[1] Cellars of wine, and sollars full of wheat,
Warehouses stuff'd with spices and with drugs,
Whole chests of gold in bullion and in coin,
Besides, I know not how much weight in pearl
Orient and round, have I within my house;
At Alexandria merchandize untold;
But yesterday two ships went from this town,
Their voyage will be worth ten thousand crowns;
In Florence, Venice, Antwerp, London, Seville,
Frankfort, Lubeck, Moscow, and where not,
Have I debts owing; and, in most of these,
Great sums of money lying in the banco.

they are not stolen, so Barabas praises wealth in the following words :—

> These are the blessings promis'd to the Jews,
> And herein was old Abraham's happiness :
> What more may heaven do for earthly man
> Than thus to pour out plenty in their laps,
> Ripping the bowels of the earth for them,
> Making the seas their servants, and the winds
> To drive their substance with successful blasts ?
> Who hateth me but for my happiness ?
> Or who is honour'd now but for his wealth ?
> Rather had I, a Jew, be hated thus,
> Than pitied in a Christian poverty ;
> For I can see no fruits in all their faith,
> But malice, falsehood, and excessive pride,
> Which methinks fits not their profession.
> Haply some hapless man hath conscience
> And for his conscience lives in beggary.

In another passage Barabas expresses his hatred and contempt of Christians in the words :—

> Some Jews are wicked, as all Christians are.

The zealous Jew and hard-hearted usurer are united in his soul, as in Shylock's ; he himself acknowledges :—

> I have been zealous in the Jewish faith,
> Hard-hearted to the poor, a covetous wretch,
> That would for lucre's sake have sold my soul ;
> A hundred for a hundred I have ta'en.

Naturally he becomes as inveterate an egotist as Shylock ; for all he cares, the world may perish as long as he is left unharmed :—

> ——So I live, perish may all the world.

Notwithstanding which he boasts of his strict righteousness :—

> The man that dealeth righteously shall live ;
> And which of you can charge me otherwise ?

In the same way Shylock says :—

> What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong ?

This Barabas, therefore, speaks for his co-religionists, and treats with Ferneze, who unceremoniously exacts the following conditions. First, the tribute due to the Turks shall be exclusively raised by the Jews, and for this purpose each individual among them is to pay down half of his fortune. Secondly, that he who refuses to pay shall forthwith become a Christian. Thirdly, that he who refuses this, shall unconditionally forfeit the whole of his possessions. Barabas ventures to protest against these conditions, so far as he himself is concerned; never will he become a Christian, and as to the half of his fortune, he begs the governor to consider:—

> Half of my substance is a city's wealth.
> Governor, it was not got so easily;
> Nor will I part so slightly therewithal.

When Ferneze threatens him with the third condition, Barabas is directly ready to pay the half, but Ferneze declares that it is now too late, and that in consequence of his hesitation his whole fortune must be forfeited.

Partly in order to recover his fortune, but still more to avenge himself on the injustice done to him, Barabas now commences a series of the most horrible and inconceivable crimes, until finally—herein also the prototype of Shylock—he himself falls into the snare which he has prepared for others. To the poet's mind this unheard of career of crime is nothing but a practical Macchiavellism, and accordingly he makes the piece open with a prologue spoken by Macchiavelli. Although the world thinks him dead, Macchiavelli says that his soul has only flown across the Alps, and that now after

the death of the Duke of Guise, he comes over from France in order to become acquainted with England and to be merry with his friends there. He is admired, he goes on to say, by those who hate him most, and although some publicly speak against his books, they read them in private nevertheless, and thereby even attain to St. Peter's Chair. Religion he regards only as a childish plaything, and considers nothing to be a sin except ignorance.

> Birds of the air will tell of murders past!
> I am asham'd to hear such fooleries.
> Might first made kings, and laws were then most sure
> When, like the Draco's, they were writ in blood.

He has not however, he says, come to England to give a lecture, but to represent the tragedy of a Jew,

> Who smiles to see how full his bags are cramm'd;
> Which money was not got without my means.
> I crave but this,—grace him as he deserves,
> And let him not be entertain'd the worse
> Because he favours me.

The coarseness of this Macchiavellism, wallowing in blood and producing impossible horrors, has fortunately been avoided by Shakespeare. But how much all this was to the taste of the public, is clear from the fact that even after Shakespeare's time, Chapman could return to it with approbation; in his 'Tragedy of Alphonsus,' for instance, both in regard to character and style, it is quite evident that Marlowe, and not Shakespeare, served him as a model.

Now although these revengeful deeds of Barabas have nothing in common with 'The Merchant of Venice,' yet there is one point of striking resemblance:

Barabas, like Shylock, has an only daughter, Abigail, who is scarcely fourteen years of age :[1]

> one sole daughter whom I hold as dear
> As Agamemnon did his Iphigen.

It may here be mentioned by the way, that Barabas, very unlike a Jew, frequently delights in Latin and Spanish citations, whereas Shylock is a genuine and thorough Jew, even in his continual quotations from the Old Testament, and from this only. Abigail's mother is nowhere spoken of, whereas Jessica's is at least once mentioned in passing. Barabas, indeed, loves his daughter as Agamemnon did his, that is to say, he sacrifices her to his revengeful plots, by employing her as a tool for his crimes. Abigail soon becomes conscious of the disgraceful part which her father makes her perform, but this consciousness is at first counterbalanced by her sense of filial duty. She says :—

> Though thou deservest hardly at my hands,
> Yet never shall these lips bewray thy life.

Abigail, precisely like Jessica, is in love with a Christian, Don Mathias, and thinks of marrying him ; Barabas, however, is opposed to the match, not so much because the lover is a Christian, but more so because he is poor. Don Lodowick, Ferneze's son, is also enamoured of the fair Jewess, and likewise seeks her in marriage. But Barabas, whose feeling of revenge against Don Lodowick's father is beyond all bounds, manages, with the help of his all too obedient daughter,

[1] Shakespeare's Juliet also, as is well known, is not quite fourteen.—According to others, the story of Jessica's elopement has its origin in the Novellino by Massuccio di Salerno (about 1470); compare Dunlop, Skottowe (Life of Shakespeare, i. 322 seq.), and Drake. It is very possible that Shakespeare was acquainted with this Novellette also.

that her two lovers kill each other. Tired of these horrors, Abigail finally enters a convent, which has been erected in her father's house, and there, after having confessed her own and her father's crime, is poisoned with the rest of the nuns, by means of some rice soup which her father has contrived to get into the house.

Can there be any doubt that we here have, if not the prototype, at least the germ and the suggestion of Shylock?[1] To such a searcher of hearts as Shakespeare, it was an irresistible temptation to transform this Barabas into a genuine Jewish usurer, and to change the bombastic and impossible criminal into a real man, with human motives, passions, and actions. Barabas, if any, was the man suited to be made the claimant in the lawsuit in regard to the pound of flesh; while at the same time his daughter afforded the poet a handle to bring him into connections of a different kind with the Christian world. Accordingly we do not doubt but that Marlowe's Barabas and his daughter have to be considered as the real starting point of

[1] We must not omit to mention that a manuscript piece, '*Der Jud von Venedig*' (in the Vienna Library), of which Genée gives a short analysis, combines the principal features of Marlowe's Jew, and Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice' into one piece. The Jew's name is Barabas, as in Marlowe; in order to carry out his revenge he repairs, in the disguise of a soldier, with the Prince of Cyprus—Cyprus takes the place of Malta —to Venice, and there calls himself Joseph. The Prince of Cyprus sues for the daughter of a Senator, Anciletta, and Barabas-Joseph advances him 2,000 ducats, under a bond for a pound of flesh. Anciletta then plays the part of Portia. This Vienna comedy, according to Genée, was not composed till the end of the seventeenth century; we know, however, that as early as 1626, a '*Comödia von Josepho Juden von Venedigk*' was acted at Dresden, which was probably the same. Rud. Genée, Geschichte der Shakespeare'schen Dramen (Leipzig, 1870), 164 seq., 409 seqq.

Shakespeare's play. The tale in the Pecorone does not only leave the character of the Jew completely unfinished, but mentions no daughter.

As already remarked, Barabas is enormously wealthy; Marlowe's imagination actually revels in the description of his riches. In addition to the passages quoted above, we may give the monologue with which Barabas opens the play, sitting, according to the stage direction, in his counting-house with a heap of gold before him :—

> So that of thus much that return was made ;
> And of the third part of the Persian ships
> There was the venture summ'd and satisfied.
> As for those Samnites, and the men of Uz,
> That bought my Spanish oils and wines of Greece,
> Here have I purs'd their paltry silverlings.
> Fie, what a trouble 'tis to count this trash !
> Well fare the Arabians, who so richly pay
> The things they traffic for with wedge of gold,
> Whereof a man may easily in a day
> Tell that which may maintain him all his life. . . . .
> Give me the merchants of the Indian mines,
> That trade in metal of the purest mould ;
> The wealthy Moor, that in the eastern rocks
> Without control can pick his riches up,
> And in his house heap pearl like pebble-stones,
> Receive them free, and sell them by the weight ;
> Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
> Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,
> Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
> And seld-seen costly stones . . . .
> This is the ware wherein consists my wealth ;
> And thus methinks should men of judgment frame
> Their means of traffic from the vulgar trade,
> And as their wealth increaseth, so inclose
> Infinite riches in a little room.

In this strain Barabas refers over and over again to his ducats, his stones, and his pearls, with the most sensual, we might almost say, voluptuous pleasure. In

a word, Marlowe here indulges in that dream of fabulous wealth which no doubt every poet has once dreamt of, all the more so because poets, ever since Homer's days, have been doomed to poverty. Hogarth has satirised this trait of poetic imagination by depicting an unfortunate poet, in the depths of his poverty, adorning his garret with a map of the Peruvian gold mines, and by making him write a treatise on the payment of the English national debt. Is it likely that Shakespeare, who was so rich in experiences of the inner and outer life, should alone have been exempt from this poetical weakness? If we were to believe this, we ought to suppose that he had never experienced the bitterness of poverty, that he had never, in his London life, become acquainted with the aiming and striving after wealth, and that he had never known of the solid riches of the English aristocracy. In a high and noble mind like his, the dream of wealth certainly must have assumed a different shape from what it does in the soul of a Jewish usurer; with him the happiness of earthly possession did not assume the form of precious stones and pearls, but as with Walter Scott, at a later day, lay in the extent of landed property. It is well known with what great success he strove after landed possessions, and that, considering his circumstances, he made a very considerable fortune. He not only acquired houses and lands in London and Stratford, but seems to have had a tolerably good knowledge of other kinds of money transactions. It is therefore easily conceivable that he may have felt the necessity of, as it were, poetically freeing himself from all sorts of external and internal influences which entered

his mind in regard to wealth and property. Marlowe's play, as well as the story of the lady of Belmont, could not fail to touch this chord in his soul, for in the latter he met with wealth no less immense, although it did not consist of dead stones, but of a lovely country and a rich port-town belonging to a young, beautiful, and gay lady.[1] What a splendid contrast to the Jewish usurer and miser! The lady with the novelist is surrounded by suitors who seem almost less attracted by her beauty than by the prospect of gaining those glorious possessions, which she herself is anxious to increase in a manner not exactly generous, as she has made it a rule that every wooer who does not stand the trial which she demands, shall forfeit his ship and all his possessions, and return home a ruined man. In this way Giannetto twice loses his ship to her, but the third time, through the assistance of a lady's-maid who is friendly to him, he comes off victorious. As to the trial imposed upon the lovers in the Pecorone, it is of such a rude and sensual kind that Shakespeare could not help replacing it by another.[2] For this purpose he chose the story of the selection of caskets from the 'Gesta Romanorum,' which was most naturally suited to the circumstances. The precious metals, wealth, and the desire for it, here also play their part, and the story enforces the moral that wealth in itself is nothing, and that its importance lies only in what the owner makes

[1] Dunlop, translated by Liebrecht (p. 262), and Delius assume that the poet became acquainted with the story of the Pecorone from an English version, which they say has been lost. There is no actual ground for such a supposition, which is no less bold than to believe that the poet understood Italian and had read the story in the original.

[2] Simrock has traced this trial in a number of similar legends.

of it. Shakespeare transformed the widowed Lady of Belmont into the ideal figure of Portia, Giannetto into Bassanio; Giannetto's foster-father, Ansaldo, became the princely merchant, to whom the poet also transferred from Marlowe the possession of the rich merchantmen which sail over all seas.[1] Nerissa is that good-natured lady's-maid who betrayed the secret to Giannetto, and in the Pecorone marries Messer Ansaldo, although he is there described as a grandfather; Shakespeare provided her in Gratiano with a younger and more suitable lover. That the clown and his father are added to these *dramatis personæ* cannot surprise us. Thus we have all the characters of the play together. But how has Shakespeare brought all these figures into the most wonderful and varied relations to one another! How he has set them in motion by the most different motives co-operating towards an internal unity! How he has woven all into a fairy-like and yet internally true and probable whole, which even now, after the lapse of centuries, captivates both hearers and readers, leaving them no chance of escape, in spite of all criticisms.

Thus we have by a different path come to the same conclusion as Gervinus, and find the fundamental thought of the play to be man's relation to wealth. As Gervinus justly observes, Shakespeare, towards the end of his career, in 'Timon of Athens,' returns again

[1] By this means not only a correct position was given to the royal merchant, but at the same time the character of the Jew was formed with greater truth and compactness. Transmarine mercantile undertakings are not the business of a Jewish usurer, who from the proverb knows full well that water needs support, and therefore prefers sticking to the safe business of money-lending, and invests his wealth quite logically in precious stones, which may easily be concealed and transported, and cannot be deprived of their value.

to the same question, which however commonplace in appearance, occupies a most prominent position among the agents of human society. Timon, likewise in possession of immense wealth, is the exact contrast to Shylock; he is a senseless squanderer, just as the latter is a senseless miser, for Shylock is a miser as well as a usurer—and what usurer is not? To him wealth is the idol which he worships, possession itself is his aim and pleasure, he stands upon the lowest stage which man can occupy in regard to property, upon the same stage as a raven or a magpie. All the four Crœsuses —Shylock, Antonio, Portia, and Timon—with their surroundings, show us that wealth or possession in itself is not happiness, that poverty in itself is not unhappiness. His own confession of faith on this subject, perhaps his own wish, the poet puts in the mouth of Nerissa, who says: 'For aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing. It is therefore no small happiness to be seated in the mean; superfluity comes sooner by grey hairs, but competency lives longer.' But the poet goes more deeply into the matter than Nerissa with her mother-wit; he knows that not only does superfluity come sooner by grey hairs, but that possession leads to moral degradation and ruin if it is not made to serve a moral purpose; he knows that it must never itself be the object, as in the case of Barabas and Shylock, but that a true man must, on the contrary, be able to sacrifice his wealth to higher objects, as required by the inscription on the leaden casket. In all cases the question ought to be not what a man has, but what he is;

the having is but the shell, the being is the kernel. Moreover wealth, as Gervinus expresses it, is a test of character. This conception readily passes over into the other, that having is regarded only as an apparent good, the being, on the other hand, as the true essence, and that accordingly, the play treats of the struggle between Appearance and Reality.

It has been a matter of discussion whether Shylock is a tragic or a comic character. In order to bring this dispute to a final decision, the subject requires to be minutely sifted. Schlegel leaves the question untouched, and merely regards the Jew Shylock as one of those 'inconceivable masterpieces of character which are unexampled except in Shakespeare.' Gottschall, on the contrary, considers him as 'one of the maddest monsters in a story as unnatural as it is disgusting,' as 'a bloodthirsty Bajazzo in whom the poet, to the delight of the groundlings, ridiculed the chosen people.' According to Rümelin,[1] Shakespeare doubtless considered the whole affair with Shylock as comic. He adds: 'The poet here introduces into a bright action an element, horrible at first sight, but which is merely intended to increase the merriment, much in the same way as the Empusa among the ancients, and in modern times *Knecht Ruprecht* and St. Nicolas in Germany, who at Christmas will scare the children only to heighten their mirth. For the reader is of course certain from the beginning, that the Jew will be outdone at the end of the play, and will lose his daughter as well as his money. The poet has only, as it were, in passing, bestowed on him from his rich treasury a few deeper

[1] Shakespeare-Studien (2nd edit.), Stuttgard, 1874.

motives; this is all. He does not, however, altogether (somewhat then, after all!) leave the sphere of the comic.' Hebler likewise does not hesitate to call Shylock a comic personage, whose fate proportionately is no harder, rather milder, than that which finally befalls other comic characters in Shakespeare, Falstaff for example. Gervinus is vexed that 'at this time of the degeneracy of art and morals, vulgarity and madness could go so far as to make a martyr out of this outcast of humanity.' A martyr he certainly is not, but we must allow extenuating circumstances in his favour. Shylock is a usurer, although it is nowhere expressly said that, like Barabas, he has taken a hundred per cent., or oppressed and drained the poor. There is only one passage where such a thing is hinted at, viz., the lines spoken by Antonio :—

> He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
> I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
> Many that have at times made moan to me;
> Therefore he hates me.

Shylock's own version is different; he ascribes the origin of their mutual hatred to Antonio, and persists repeatedly in the assertion that his gains are righteous, and that he only uses what is his own. We place, however, little faith in what Shylock calls righteous, and although the poet, as he is fond of doing, has to some extent left the true state of affairs concealed, yet Shylock in this matter cannot be exonerated. But who made him a usurer? How has it come about that wealth and gain have stifled all moral sense in him, instead of leading him to princely generosity, like Antonio, or to the noblest enjoyment of life in

the faithful performance of duty, like Portia? We know no other answer to this question, except that the Christians have made Shylock what he is. We do not mean to say that Shakespeare intended to hint at any thing of the kind, although the temptation of drawing such inferences lies nearer in this play than elsewhere in Shakespeare. Whether the poet intended it or not, Shylock, in his hand, has become the representative of Judaism in its lowest degradation, and this degradation has undeniably been caused by centuries of political and social bondage. Antonio and his friends are true representatives of the Christian community, and at least according to our present ideas, by no means such exemplary Christians as Hebler would have it. Cooped up in their ghettos, and marked by a conspicuous dress like hangmen and prostitutes, the Jews were excluded from the legal as well as the moral organism of the state. All branches of business were prohibited to them except that of barter and dealings in money, and this sole source of acquiring the means of existence was branded by the name of usury. According to the doctrines of the Catholic Church, it was a grievous sin to take interest on money lent; it was a crime amenable to the ecclesiastic tribunals, and Pope Clement V. declared it heresy to vindicate it. The subsequent Popes, Pius V. and Sixtus V. (1585–1590), even Benedict XIV. (as late as the middle of the eighteenth century, confirmed this doctrine. The outcast Jew alone was permitted to take interest. The reformers on this point adopted the doctrine of the Romish Church; Luther declared all taking of interest as usury, and Edward VI. forbade it. Luther, in fact, was not

free from fanatical hatred against the Jews. He writes: 'Know thou, dear Christian, that next to the devil, thou canst have no more bitter or eager enemy than a downright Jew, one who seriously means to be the Jew. I will give thee mine honest advice: set fire to their synagogues, and that which will not burn, load and cover it with earth, so that man shall see neither a stone nor a vestige of it everlastingly.' [1]

We must distinctly recollect this state of things, and bear in mind the intellectual foundations out of which the 'Merchant of Venice' originated, in order to be able to place ourselves within the sphere of Shakespeare's ideas. Thus, in accordance with the laws of the Church, the Christian Antonio takes no interest for his money, but overstepping his province, he abuses the Jew for doing so, and ill-treats him at the Exchange without there having been any provocation or cause for it on Shylock's part.

> Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause,

says Shylock, and in another passage adds that Antonio hates him simply because he is a Jew, in fact, that Antonio hates his sacred nation. This hatred of Antonio is scarcely less culpable than the Jew's; Shylock can bring forward the excuse that he has not been brought up, either by his family or by society, to love humanity or to practise moral duties. Antonio has certainly also been brought up to hate the Jews. Shylock bears Antonio's ill-treatment with composure:—

> Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;
> For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.

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[1] From Hebler, 66 seq.

This same 'patient shrug' Marlowe's Barabas gives in answer to the sneers of the Christians :—

> We Jews can fawn like spaniels when we please ;
> And when we grin we bite ; yet are our looks
> As innocent and harmless as a lamb's.
> I learn'd in Florence how to kiss my hand,
> Heave up my shoulders when they call me dog,
> And duck as low as any barefoot friar.

It can, however, raise no astonishment that in spite of all patience a bitter feeling of revenge, like a subcutaneous ulcer, is developed in Shylock against the Christian who has interfered with his sole means of making money (he has hindered him half a million), who has in public heaped him with abuse, kicked him, and spat upon his beard. This state of things, this mutual relation of the characters to one another, is portrayed throughout the whole play with absolute truth. No more forcible complaint against the Christians, no more impressive justification of the Jews can be given than the celebrated passage in Act III. 1 : 'Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me I will execute; and it shall

go hard but I will better the instruction.' Shylock has grown up under the letter of the Mosaic religion, what wonder therefore that he at last knows of nothing higher than the letter, and the right of the letter? He only understands an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, and what he learned of Christianity was not of a nature to raise him to a higher conception of Right and of Morality. In such circumstances many a man would, like him, seek a good opportunity of getting Antonio into his power, in order to indulge his old grudge; even the worm will turn when it is trodden upon. The full cup overflows when Jessica elopes with a Christian, and takes away with her her father's ducats and jewels. If she had only been carried off by one of her own religion; but that one of Shylock's deadly enemies should marry her is the height of affliction. 'I have a daughter,' exclaims Shylock :—

> Would any of the stock of Barabas
> Had been her husband, rather than a Christian !

Salanio is of opinion that Shylock ought to have known that the bird was fledged, and that it is the complexion of them all to leave the nest. Shylock, however, cannot help thinking that his daughter has been deceived and led astray by Lorenzo, and must lay this loss too at the door of the Christians. Hence Salanio very justly remarks, when Jessica's flight is spoken of :—

> Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
> Or he shall pay for this.

Shylock in this respect reminds us of old Brabantio, who likewise makes Othello responsible for his child's flight, as he thinks there can be no other possibility than that he bewitched her. The great majority of

fathers, in like circumstances, would very probably indulge in a similar train of thoughts.

Nevertheless, Shylock's relation to his daughter is a point where least can be said in his excuse. The ossification of his mind and feelings, his selfishness and bitterness, have also entered his family life, and like corrosive acids, have eaten and destroyed it. While his co-religionists are wont to hold family ties in high estimation, and to keep their domestic life in a certain patriarchal holiness, so as to escape from the oppression of the outer world, Shylock, according to Jessica, makes his home a hell. He does not succeed in leaving harshness, avarice, hatred, and revenge out of doors, and in being gentle, kind, and generous within the bosom of his family—it is indeed an almost impossible task. Can the early death of his wife have contributed to this? But the remembrance of her only attaches to the turquoise which she has given him. If we may infer Shylock's conjugal love from his paternal love, there can be as little said of the one as of the other, and consequently we can scarcely suppose that had Leah lived longer she would have exercised a softening and ennobling influence upon her husband's character. His ducats and his stones, and the feeling of revenge against his Christian oppressors, have so completely taken possession of his heart, that there is not even the smallest space left for conjugal or paternal love. Jessica is nothing to him but the keeper of his house and the guardian of his treasures.[1] She leads the life

[1] It is, therefore, a misapprehension when Shylock, on the stage, when going to dine with Bassanio, affectionately kisses Jessica on the forehead, as we have seen it done by actors, who in other respects gave excellent representations of Shylock.

of a prisoner; she is to shut the ears of the house, and, according to oriental custom, is not allowed to put her head out of the window to gape at 'varnished' Christian fools who are an abomination to her father. That she should possess any claim to the enjoyment of life Shylock never dreams of; his withered soul never supposes that hers is expanding in youthful excitement and desire. Why does he not surround her life with at least such ornaments and finery as young girls are accustomed to regard as a great part of their happiness? Why does he not place her under the motherly care of a companion, instead of leaving her completely to herself at home, while he goes about his money transactions? Why? From greed, selfishness, and hard-heartedness. The want of fatherly feeling on his part necessarily produces a want of filial feeling on hers. She indemnifies herself by a confidential relation with the servant, who is a kind-hearted creature, and a merry devil (the patch is kind enough, says Shylock) and thus makes the domestic hell somewhat endurable; besides, he serves her as *postillon d'amour*. In his relation to Launcelot Shylock appears a thorough miser, in whose house there is work enough, but precious little to eat. Gervinus, indeed, lays the blame upon Launcelot, whom he characterises as 'voracious,' but there is no other proof of this than Shylock's remark that he is a 'huge feeder,' and that he will not be able to 'gormandise' at Bassanio's as he has done with him.[1] Launcelot, on the other hand, complains to his father, that his master

[1] This feature in Shylock's character again recalls Barabas, who chooses a sickly slave, for whom he may provide cheaply. 'I must have one,' he says, 'that's sickly, an't be but for sparing victuals; 'tis not a stone of beef a day will maintain you in these chops.'

is a 'very Jew,' that he is absolutely starved in his service, and that his father might 'count every finger he has with his ribs.' Old Gobbo probably knew very well why he brought a dish of doves to Master Jew, some of which he might hope would fall to the share of his son, the staff of his old age. Shylock frankly acknowledges that he accepts Bassanio's invitation merely to feed upon the extravagant Christian. With him, as with all misers, stinginess no doubt presided over the kitchen, and certainly Jessica was kept no less short than the servant. As too much oppression will cause rebellion, so Jessica begins to appropriate the ducats, all of which must necessarily fall to her share after her father's death, she being the only child: she but takes her inheritance in advance. Even the ducat which she gives Launcelot on parting was scarcely a part of her own scanty pocket-money. Much as she feels it 'a heinous sin' that she is ashamed of being her father's child, and that she is only the daughter of his blood, not of his heart, yet she makes herself no reproaches about the more glaring transgression of making off with her father's money. And pretty considerable the theft must have been, for if Shylock does not greatly exaggerate, she took, among others, that precious stone which at Frankfort had cost him two thousand ducats. Gervinus considers Jessica to be an 'ethereal being, naïve and inexperienced as a child, and perfectly unacquainted with the value of money.' This last assertion is, however, contradicted by her own words when quitting her father's house.

Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains,

she calls to her lover, while she hurries back to 'gild'

herself with more ducats. She is consequently by no means unconscious of the value of money, although in regard to her relation to property, as well as in other respects, she differs from her race. Hence it is repeatedly said that she is no Jewess at all, and Launcelot tells her to her face, 'If a Christian did not play the knave and get thee, I am much deceived.' The true value of money she never learned; her father's greed becomes extravagance in her, the privations in her father's hell engender a thirst for pleasures, and she values money only as a means of procuring the enjoyments of life withheld from her. The merry night at Genoa is thus explained. Jessica's lover, according to his own confession, is as unthrifty as herself; no wonder then that the merry couple arrives at Belmont without a farthing, where Portia takes them into her service as superintendents of her household. When Nerissa gives Lorenzo Shylock's will, which appoints them his heirs, Lorenzo exclaims :—

> Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
> Of starved people.

However repulsive Jessica's appropriation of her father's ducats may be to our feelings, yet when considering all the circumstances, we are inclined to forgive the thoughtless child, especially because the poet himself intends her to be mildly judged; for when Shylock exclaims 'she is damned,' he is answered by Salarino, 'that's certain, if the devil may be her judge.' That Lorenzo gives her unmixed praise stands to reason; he says :—

> Beshrew me but I love her heartily;
> For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
> And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
> And true she is, as she hath proved herself.

In regard to the last-named virtue, faithfulness, it is fortunate that there is no Iago near, to whisper into the confiding lover's ear :—

She did deceive her father, marrying you.

This leads us to the question of Jessica's flight. Its moral justification has been successfully undertaken by different commentators, and nothing but a short summing up is required on our part. The relation existing between father and daughter, as already remarked, is only a blood relationship, not a moral one. As Jessica sees no other possibility, she breaks this relation violently, in order to establish a new moral one by marriage ; she does this without reflection, by natural instinct. The reflection on the rightness of her elopement has been put by the poet in Launcelot's mouth, who comes to the conclusion that on his part it would not be right, and who says that he will only accept another situation with the Jew's knowledge and consent. His position is certainly different from that of Jessica, for not being in the Jew's paternal power, he need not seek refuge in a violent breach of engagement. In his relation to his father Launcelot is the very reverse of Jessica, for in spite of the tricks which in his privilege as clown he does not scruple to play upon the blind old man, he feels after all that he is, was, and ever will be his child, and asks for his blessing. It is this point, moreover, which brings the scene between the two Gobbos into a close connection with the whole—a scene which the public is generally inclined to consider as a superfluous by-play. As will be seen below, Portia in her filial obedience is a still more unequivocal contrast to Jessica.

When Shylock discovers Jessica's flight, he runs through the streets of Venice like a madman, calling out for his daughter and his ducats, and crying for help from the Doge and the courts of justice. The street boys troop at his heels, and we seem to hear their shouts and jeers. This is the only scene in which Shylock would appear in a ridiculous light, and the poet very wisely does not bring it upon the stage, but gives it as a report. It seems evident that he does not wish to lay the curse of ridicule upon the man who already bears the weight of a double curse as a Jew and a usurer. Nay, we are even here inclined to sympathise with the Jew. But the matter appears in a very different light when Shylock, through Tubal, receives the news of Jessica's doings in Genoa. Here his hard-hearted avarice and his obdurate selfishness break out in a truly revolting manner. Here he reveals himself in all the nakedness of his degradation, without a spark of human feeling, without an idea of the moral laws and ties which establish and govern society. His exclusive love for his stones has made him a stone. No syllable escapes his lips to express how heavy a blow has fallen upon his paternal heart, and that he is now, in his old age, left completely forsaken and forlorn. He only laments his ducats and his stones; were his daughter before him in her coffin, with the jewels in her ear, he would be content and satisfied. Now he feels more than ever the curse which weighs on his people—not because he has lost his daughter, the only being related to him, but because he has lost his ducats and stones, which she has squandered. His character here already rises to a terrible extreme, and

there is but one step to the climax, which is reached in the scene of the catastrophe.

It has lately been asserted that in this catastrophe Shakespeare has exceeded the bounds of tragedy. Shylock's lust for the pound of flesh, his sharpening his knife, his refusal to call in a surgeon because it is not so nominated in the bond, all this is said to excite horror and disgust, instead of fear and sympathy. In reply to this objection it must be taken into consideration that Shakespeare's contemporaries regarded the plot of the play from a different point of view from what we now do; they were so familiar with it that the horror had lost its edge, for the story of the forfeited pound of flesh, although in different forms, was the common property of almost all European nations during the Middle Ages. However attractive the investigations on the origin, diffusion, and significance of this legend may be, they are here only in so far of importance as they point out the sources from which Shakespeare has drawn. Only in passing therefore we may mention that Benfey[1] traces the story of the pound of flesh, as well as the selection of caskets, to Buddhist legends, and connects the original meaning of the former with the poetically glorified and almost voluptuous self-sacrifice and self-castigation of the Buddhists, who, as it were, 'do pay for their sins, by flesh cut from their bodies and weighed, the trier meanwhile, like an obdurate creditor, standing by and appearing insatiable.' According to him, both legends have come to the West through the intermediate stages of Mongols and Mussulmen. In opposition to this

[1] Pantschatantra, i. 391, 410.

oriental origin of the legend, which Douce and Dunlop had assumed before, Simrock most emphatically maintains that the West has reacted in various ways upon the East, and has richly paid for the legends which it received thence, by others which it has transplanted there. The tribes of the East, he says, were from the earliest times connected with those of the West by commercial intercourse; is it likely then that they only exchanged their wares, and not their stories and myths as well? The inner form of the legend, he maintains, must determine its origin. Simrock considers the legend of the pound of flesh to be a legal-historical one, which he traces back to the Roman law of the Twelve Tables, according to which the creditor might kill his insolvent debtor. If there were several creditors, each one might claim the right of killing, and they divided the corpse between them according to the uncial relation of the debt. '*Tertiis nundinis*,' are the words in the law of the Twelve Tables, '*partis secanto; si plus minusve secuerint se* (*sine*) *fraude esto*.' Similar clauses are found in the old Germanic law. The Norwegian Guleding law permits the creditor to hack off from the debtor who will not work for him as much flesh as he likes, above or below.[1] According to Simrock the legend represents the victory of *Aequitas* over *Jus strictum*, that is the essential substance of the whole history of Roman Law. The judge cannot bend the strict letter of the law against the creditor, but he can raise an opposition to his opposition by binding

[1] Compare Rudolph Grisebach, 'Ueber Ursprung und Bedeutung der Sage von Shylock,' in Westermann's 'Illustrirte Deutsche Monatshefte,' October 1868, No. 145. p. 89–93.

him to a *Jus strictissimum*, and this in favour of *Aequitas*, which, like every more recent legal principle, asserts itself in the form of an *Exceptio* by annulling the substance of the old law, without formally destroying it. It was more especially the 'Gesta Romanorum,' not merely in the original, but also the English and German versions of it, which contributed to the diffusion of the legend.[1] A ballad by a German Meistersänger, entitled 'The Law of the Emperor Charles,' which was published as a broadside at Bamberg in 1493, and at Strasburg in 1498, makes the story occur in the court of the Emperor Charles, evidently Charlemagne.[2] A sentence at the end of this ballad forcibly reminds us of Portia's eulogy on Mercy. 'Whosoever,' thus the poet concludes, 'mingles mercy with justice, his honour shall be strengthened by God.' In other forms the story exists in Gaelic,[3] and in Bosnia. The sharpening of the knife, which is especially disapproved by modern critics, does not occur in these little developed forms of the legend, but is found in 'Poor Henry,'[4] and in 'Blue Beard,' and according to Simrock was widely popular. It is, as we have said, neither practicable, nor appertaining to our subject, further to trace

[1] R. Robinson, 'A Record of Ancient Historyes, in Latin Gesta Romanorum, perused, corrected, and bettered,' from 1577 till 1601, appeared in six editions. Whether it contains the story of the forfeited pound of flesh is, however, not clear, either from Warton or Simrock.

[2] Docen, 'Museum für Altdeutsche Literatur und Kunst,' Bd. ii. Heft 1, S. 276–283. The ballad is also contained in the 'Ambraser Liederbuch vom Jahre 1582, herausgegeben von Joseph Bergmann (Stuttgart, 1845), S. 167 seqq.' (*Von einem Kauffman, der eim Jüden ein Pfund Schmers aus seiner Seiten versetzet.*)

[3] J. F. Campbell, 'Popular Tales of the West Highlands,' Edinburgh, 1860; Benfey's 'Orient and Occident,' ii. 313 seqq.

[4] 'Der arme Heinrich,' edited by the Brothers Grimm, p. 159.

the history of the legend, and only one more remark may be permitted. Simrock, Delius, and others reckon Percy's ballad of the Jew Gernutus among Shakespeare's sources, while Al. Schmidt has very justly raised the doubt whether the ballad was not, on the contrary, suggested by Shakespeare's play. We must, indeed, be careful with these ballads, and well consider the hint thrown out by Dyce concerning their origin.[1] Dyce points out that on the day before Marlowe's 'Jew of Malta' was entered at Stationers' Hall (May 17, 1594) a ballad on the same subject, 'derived, we may presume, from the tragedy,' had likewise been entered. 'When monarchs build, the rubbish-carriers flourish,' as Schiller has it. A tragedy which shook the house and obtained the approbation of the multitude was indeed likely enough to encourage a poor ballad poet, and to draw a few notes from his poetic penny-whistle. That Percy's ballad professes to be taken from the Italian—'as Italian writers tell'—does not contradict this notion, and, according to our conviction, is of far less importance than several other features which exactly coincide with Shakespeare, and which were probably due to a superior mind like his. Among these are the representation of the forfeiture as a humorous joke; the mention of the bond, which is not found in the legend; the fact that the debtor's ships are all at sea, and have not returned; the sharpening of the knife—in the Pecorone, the Jew has indeed a knife made expressly for the purpose, but still he does not sharpen it; lastly, the Jew's intention to cut off the

[1] The works of Marlowe, p. xxiii. Compare also p. xx: 'ballads were frequently founded on favourite dramas.'

flesh from a part where it must lead to the debtor's death. At all events it seems advisable to leave the ballad out of the question, all the more so, as Shakespeare in most cases was wont to take his materials from novels and not from ballads, as in the former he found them in a far more dramatic form than in the latter.

These remarks prove with certainty at least the one thing which here concerns us, namely, that the subject was so familiar to Shakespeare's public that it appeared to them in a less horrible light than to us moderns. Besides, it has already been admitted that the English of the Elizabethan period found pleasure in the representation of bloody scenes, and that Shakespeare, however much he did to ennoble the popular taste, yet could not completely change it. Lastly, we must not omit to take into consideration that, if tragic subjects were to be weighed, so to speak, in scales for weighing gold, not many would be found in which something or other was not objectionable. We will not refer to Shelley's Cenci, to Gerstenberg's Ugolino, and similar second and third-rate pieces, we will only remind the reader of one of the most beautiful tragedies of classic antiquity—'King Œdipus' (and 'Antigone' to boot)—the story of which is based upon a marriage between mother and son. Is this subject, although no bloody horror, not just as revolting to our taste as any of Shakespeare's stories can be? Upon such things no abstract judgment can be pronounced, but the totality of the conditions under which the poem has originated must be considered. It may be admitted that a poet

of the present day would be very wrong to take as a subject the forfeiture of a pound of flesh, although the fact that 'The Merchant of Venice' is everywhere a favourite stage piece, sufficiently proves that our public, correctly estimating the infinite beauty of the composition, finds no fault with the character of the story. Schlegel judges quite rightly in saying that the play is calculated to produce the strongest effect upon the stage, and that to an attentive critic it is a marvel of poetic skill as well. Much depends upon the representation, and Shylock is a part which least of all brooks a digression from 'the modesty of nature;' it lies so near the boundary that an exaggerating actor must necessarily overleap it.

Judaism forms by no means an external or accidental, but an inner and essential element in Shylock's character; in fact, he could only have become what he is, under the Mosaic religion. Not only every inch of him, but every fibre in him is a Jew. Out of his Mosaism first arises his formal righteousness; his deeds are to fall upon his head, for what judgment shall he dread, as he does no wrong. From his Mosaism flows his Jewish logic, his bitter sarcasm, his spirit of revenge. Where God is represented as an avenger, revenge is not only allowable but a duty. Lastly his obstinacy and hardness agree with it; he has sworn by his holy Sabbath to insist upon his bond; he has an oath in heaven, shall he lay perjury upon his soul? Shylock is not overcome by admitting the necessity of mercy set forth by the Christian side, but by his own vital principle, his worship of the letter; the letter, which is

his God, turns with fatal effect against himself. It could not be expected that it should have been otherwise, as, according to our ideas, the deeds of Shylock's Christian opponents by no means prove that they are penetrated by the significance of mercy, in its full extent. The Doge, with a certain kind of self-complacency, does indeed address the Jew :—

> That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
> I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.

But we cannot forbear taking 'this difference of the spirits' into nearer consideration. Portia, in a terrible climax, explains to the Jew that, according to the law of the Republic, he has forfeited his possessions and his life, because he, an alien, by direct and indirect attempts, has sought the life of one of its citizens. The one half of his fortune falls to his adversary, the other to the state, unless the latter be commuted through mercy into a fine. His life lies in the hands of the Doge, who in his exclusive right has to dispose of it. The Doge therefore grants him his life before he asks for it; upon Antonio's proposal, moreover, Shylock is allowed to retain that half of his fortune which is forfeited to the state, and Antonio accepts the other half only as a usufruct till Shylock's death, so as to hand it over to his rightful heirs, Lorenzo and Jessica. In addition to this, Shylock, which one might think a matter of course, is obliged to promise to make these two heirs of all he leaves at his death. In reality therefore Shylock, exclusive of the 3,000 ducats which he has advanced to Antonio, loses only one half of his fortune, and even that is secured to his heirs. Considering the draconic laws of Venice, this

may be regarded as a mild punishment, although it certainly does fall heavily upon the Jew.

> Nay, take my life and all ; pardon not that :
> You take my house, when you do take the prop
> That doth sustain my house ; you take my life
> When you do take the means whereby I live.[1]

But now comes the last condition likewise proposed by Antonio : Shylock shall at once become a Christian; if he will not fulfil this condition, in addition to the preceding ones, the Doge will revoke the granted pardon. Shylock therefore has only the choice between immediate death on the one hand, and the abjuration of his faith, and the adoption of the religion of his deadly enemies, on the other. This feature, which is taken from Marlowe, according to our modern feelings, goes beyond the idea of punishment : it is no longer poetic justice or tragical retribution, it is mental and moral annihilation, the inevitable consequences of which must lead to physical death as well. The indulgence in regard to the forfeiture of his fortune is hereby more than counterbalanced. Where, then, is Horn's 'almost

[1] Compare the passage in Marlowe (ed. Dyce, 1862, p. 150) :—

Bar. You have my goods, my money, and my wealth,
My ships, my store, and all that I enjoy'd ;
And having all, you can request no more,
Unless your unrelenting, flinty hearts
Suppress all pity in your stony breasts,
And now shall move you to bereave my life.
Fern. No, Barabas ; to stain our hands with blood
Is far from us and our profession.
Bar. Why, I esteem the injury far less
To take the lives of miserable men
Than be the causers of their misery.
You have my wealth, the labour of my life,
The comfort of mine age, my children's hope ;
And therefore ne'er distinguish of the wrong.

blessed idea of the conciliatory love and mediating mercy?' The sentence of death would have been mild compared to this torture. However grievously Shylock may have offended, however heartily we despise and condemn his character, yet we cannot avoid a momentary feeling of sympathy for him when he staggers out of the court, crushed by the pardon which the Doge has granted him. Nay, we even feel inclined to agree with the young lady who, according to H. Heine, at the conclusion of the fourth act, exclaimed, 'The poor man is wronged!' In a word, we find ourselves entirely opposed to Hebler, who thinks that we might unceremoniously laugh at Gratiano's jokes about the frustrated plan, and about the prospect of bringing the Jew to the gallows.

This point has generally been passed over in a light and extenuating manner, as if little or nothing depended upon it. Rümelin says, 'The thing is bearable only because we have to do with a fictitious action, the details of which must not be criticised too narrowly.' He also reminds those critics who insist upon stamping Shakespeare a Christian poet, that this passage should be taken *ad notam*; for he whose faith in his Church is a sincere matter of the heart, would not even cursorily pen such a scene. Hebler alone (p. 98 seqq.) discusses the subject at some length. After speaking of Portia's Christianity—who appears to him as the most ideal Christian that ever existed in life or in art—he continues somewhat in the following manner: 'In the face of such a Shakespearean Christianity, the Judaism of a Shylock cannot maintain its right, and looking at it from this point of view, we even feel the

demand that he should allow himself to be baptised to be more apparently than actually cruel. Shylock has been altogether overcome by Antonio and his principles; his baptism signifies nothing more than an acknowledgment of this fact, a fact which no one feels more acutely than does the vanquished man himself. Portia's recommendation of Christian mercy can no more be considered as an ordinary attempt at conversion, than Antonio's demand can be considered actual zelotism. Moreover, the abjuration of a religion can be more readily expected from one whose attachment to it is, after all, not very great. That which to Shylock is true religion, his usury, he may continue to practise even after baptism if he chooses; under Christian forms and phrases, he will find more competitors than he cares for. But to our feeling, which rejects all religious compulsion, there nevertheless remains a residue of actual harshness in Antonio's demand. Shakespeare can occasionally be harsh, but he is never soft, never sentimental.'

Such is Hebler's judgment, which however does by no means exhaust or settle the matter. In the first place, so much appears evident, that it is not fanatical hatred, cruel revenge, or malicious scorn which prompts Antonio to demand the condition that Shylock shall consent to be baptised. Antonio has indeed, from the beginning, abused and ill-treated the Jew, but this is the only stain upon his character. Otherwise he is distinguished by gentleness, benevolence, and kind-heartedness, and it cannot be conceived that his hatred of the Jews would amount to such cruelty, and this at the very moment when, in regard to the confiscation of

the Jew's property, he gives an unequivocal proof of his generosity. His demand for the conversion arises in all probability from an entirely different motive, and we shall hardly err in seeking it in the general religious conviction of the Middle Ages, according to which none but the believers in Christianity could partake of salvation and eternal blessedness. That the Jews are eternally lost, is known even to Marlowe's Barabas, who says :—

I am a Jew, and therefore am I lost.

It is well known that this conviction rose to the belief that it was a meritorious work to assist the non-Christians to the blessings of Christianity, even against their own wish, by forcing them to become converts.[1] From this point of view Antonio's demand and the Doge's action appear in a different light, and it is easily understood that they should regard the proposed conversion as a proof of mercy as well. They intended to save Shylock's soul from eternal perdition. There is no need of a further discussion to show how this doctrine of the Romish Church contained the germ of the most terrible fanaticism, and how it went hand in hand with the fiercest hatred of Jews and heretics; proofs of this may be found on almost every page of the history of the Middle Ages. 'At the time of the great European persecution of the Jews, in the year 1349,' says Menzel, in his History of the Germans, 'all the Jews in Strasburg who refused to kiss the crucifix, 900 in number, were burned on one huge pile of wood;

[1] St. Augustine applied the scriptural expression, 'Compel them to come in' (St. Luke ix. 23), in this sense against the Donatists. To be baptised and to belong to the Catholic Church, according to its doctrine, is the only means of salvation : *extra ecclesiam nulla salus.*

the *Brandgasse* or *Rue Brûlée* still bears its name in memory of this terrible scene. Only children were spared, and they were baptised before the eyes of their parents. Eleven hundred Jews escaped death by kissing the cross and becoming Christians.' The Jews therefore had only the choice between conversion and death, exactly as Shakespeare has shown in his play.

Thus we see that Shakespeare's public stood in quite a different relation to 'The Merchant of Venice' from what we now do. His public was still deeply imbued with hatred and contempt of the Jews, and far from considering a Jew a fellow-creature, and a member of the community possessed of equal rights with the Christians.[1] Accordingly his public saw no objection to the enforced conversion, but rather found it quite correct, and considered it a merciful punishment. Those who found pleasure in Marlowe's 'Jew of Malta,' and similar horrible plays, must certainly have revelled in Shylock's despair and laughed 'unceremoniously' at Gratiano's mockery. 'To undo a Jew is charity and not sin,' says Ithamore, in Marlowe, at the end of the fourth act. There cannot be any doubt but that Shylock was a comic character to the poet's contemporaries, and that Burbage acted in accordance with the general opinion when—as is extremely probable—he played him in a caricatured Jewish mask, although the mask can of itself scarcely be considered a sufficient proof,

[1] Jews were not tolerated in England under Elizabeth, and the question might be raised as to whether Shakespeare, if he had not made excursions on the Continent, could ever have known a Jew. In this case his divination in the delineation of the Jewish character would be all the more astonishing. As Drake in his 'Shakespeare and his Times' (Paris, 1838, p. 463) says, 'the Englishman's hatred of the Jews was moreover fanned by artificial means.'

because—as is seen from Marlowe's 'Jew of Malta' —Alleyn and his successors represented Barabas with the same hideous Jewish mask, and Barabas was assuredly no comic character.[1] Considering however that we here have to deal with a comedy, it may at all events be assumed that Shylock's mask was intended to produce a comical effect, and we agree with Hebler and Rümelin in so far as we do not doubt that the poet's public (not he himself, as Rümelin likewise maintains), reckoned Shylock among the comic characters. It is different however with the public of the present day. To us Judaism, as such, is no longer an object of hatred and contempt; the Jews have finally, in principle at least, become our fellow-citizens, with equal rights. This is a point where the progress of moral ideas since Shakespeare's time has led to essentially different moral views. The condemnation of all religious compulsion, together with legal and moral tolerance, in Protestant countries at least, have fought their way to universal acceptance. To us Shylock is no longer a comical character, we can no longer lightly pass over his enforced conversion, much less 'unceremoniously' laugh at it, let critics demonstrate the case as they please. By this change of the moral point of view, a certain

[1] The most striking feature in the face was the large oriental nose. Ithamore says to Barabas (Act II., Dyce, p. 157): 'Oh, brave, master! I worship your nose for this,' and in W. Rowley's 'Search for Money,' some one is described 'as having his visage (or vizard) like the artificiall Jewe of Malta's nose.' See Dyce, 'The Works of Chr. Marlowe,' p. xxiii. In another passage Ithamore calls the Jew 'a bottle-nosed knave,' and in a third passage he addresses him simply by 'nose.' According to the 'Funeral Elegy' on Burbage, published in Collier's 'Memoirs of the Principal Actors in the Plays of Shakespeare,' 52 seqq, Burbage played Shylock in a red wig. The nose, however, is not mentioned in this Elegy.

discordance has arisen in the play, which it did not possess with Shakespeare's contemporaries.

But in what relation did the poet himself stand to these questions? Did he share the religious bigotry and intolerance of his public, or was he in advance of it, and with a poet's gift of divination had he arrived at modern toleration? What was his intention in the creation of the character of Shylock? Did he really only wish to furnish his groundlings with a welcome subject for their rude uproariousness and love of merriment? From what we have already said it is impossible for us to arrive at such a conclusion. Even in this case Shakespeare has not departed from his 'desperate objectivity,' even here he has held up the most faithful mirror to nature, without giving us any signs of his own personal opinion, except at most between the lines. Apart from the great apostrophe in Act III. 1, and the fact that the poet only gives us the report of Shylock's wild cries for help in the streets, indications of his own opinion are to be gathered from the fifth scene of the third act, where Launcelot, in his clownish way, declares to Jessica his belief that she will be damned, because the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, and that there is but one bastard-hope left for her—viz. the supposition that she is not the Jew's daughter. When Jessica replies that then the sins of her mother should be visited upon her, he agrees that she is lost in both ways. With an unquestionable leaning upon the doctrine of the Apostle Paul,[1] Jessica now expresses her hope that she will be saved by her

[1] 1 Corinth. vii. 14: 'The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband.'

husband, who has made her a Christian. Launcelot, however, considers 'this making of Christians' very objectionable; for, says he, there are pork-eaters enough as it is, and if this goes on there will soon not be a rasher of bacon to be had. When her husband enters Jessica complains to him of Launcelot and his sayings, and Lorenzo turns the joke against Launcelot by accusing him of a love-affair with a negro woman, and winds the discussion up by saying that it will be easier for him to answer for his converting Jews than it will be for Launcelot to answer for his loose doings.

This conversation is undeniably the prelude to the condition imposed upon Shylock in the judgment-scene; it gives, as it were, the chord and the key-note to it. Herein lies its importance, otherwise it would be an idle excrescence. But which is this key-note? When we think of Launcelot's scoffing at chiromancy in Act II. 2, and at the interpretation of dreams in Act II. 5, it would be difficult to see in his conversation with Jessica anything more than witty jokes at the doctrines of the Church and the conversion of the Jews, which may have been called forth by some actual occurrence of the time. Be that as it may, the serious correlate to this humorous consideration of the subject can scarcely be any other than that the poet here personally disapproves of the change of religion imposed on Shylock. His witticisms imply the serious reflections that the Christians do not care for a convert who is neither of use nor an honour to them, and that moreover baptism will be of no avail to the Jew, who in spite of his conversion will be damned. Rümelin is quite right on this point, except that he ought not to have applied

his remark to the judgment-scene, but to the garden scene between Launcelot and Jessica; if the poet had felt a sincere affection for the doctrines of the Church, he could not have put such mockery into Launcelot's mouth, nor have allowed him to throw such a doubtful interpretation on the Doge's sentence. But to his mind the essence of religion lay in the practice of duty and morality, not in the dogma. From this point of view it would also have been impossible for him to have approved of the treatment which befell the Jew, from the state as well as from society; the deeper motives which he, in Rümelin's words, 'bestowed on the Jew in passing, from his rich treasury,' are the very ones which serve to express his own personal conviction, and which consequently forbid us to believe that he intended Shylock to be a comic personage. At the same time, however, by means of these motives he gave his public a lecture which was probably but little appreciated.

But if the poet from his broader and more tolerant religious standpoint disapproved of the more or less enforced conversion of Jews, why did he make it a condition to Shylock? The Jew might of course have come off with the fine only, even if it had been a heavier one. The contrasts in the play, designed as a comedy, would then have appeared less harsh, and the stage effect would scarcely have been less. However, as has been said, Shakespeare considered a dramatic poem a mirror, not a kaleidoscope; it is nowhere his custom to embellish or to suppress; he gives us the world and history as they are, even at the risk of every now and then resembling a naturalistic landscape-painter; nay, he possesses an undeniable predilection for sharp and

definite outlines, even although they are not always within the confines of the beautiful. Moreover his public wished above all things to see Shylock crushed, just as in Lessing's 'Nathan' the Patriarch insists upon having the Jew burned. Nay, it seems questionable whether we ourselves would approve of a representation of the play in which the condition of baptism were omitted for once, by way of trial.

Just as if Shakespeare had felt that the truth of nature had in this respect gone a little too far, he makes up for it in the fifth act by double sweetness; he evidently felt the necessity of relieving the discord, and of leading the poem back into the brighter regions of romantic comedy. The charming little Utopia in Belmont is in so far connected with the fundamental idea of wealth, as only upon the basis of wealth this development of a life which flows in such a self-conscious and unconstrained cheerfulness is possible. Even here the connection with Marlowe does not seem to be very remote; Marlowe introduces us to well-stocked granaries and treasure chambers, in which, in the spirit of his Barabas, the ideal of wealth consists, Shakespeare here leads us to his Eldorado of earthly possessions. While the object of Barabas and Shylock, as well as of Antonio, is both to acquire and to possess, here the former is completely excluded. In opposition to the floating wealth of merchants, which is dependent upon wind and waves, upon water-thieves and land-thieves, we have here to deal with a firmly established property, transmitted from generation to generation. If we imagine Portia burdened with the troubles about gain, or even about the necessities of life, we have no longer

a Portia before us. Her element of life, resting as it does upon the foundation of secured property, is the practice of the noblest humanity, the promotion and enjoyment of the good and the beautiful. The inner independence, which her character has acquired by her external independence, undeniably gives her a slight touch of the masculine, whereas in Antonio, on the contrary, a tinge of the feminine is produced by his wealth. Portia with her wealth, and in her completely isolated position as an orphan, would have been exposed to the danger of losing the qualities of her sex, and of falling a victim to emancipation, had she not been kept in the sphere of dependence and subordination, appropriate to the female sex, by the directions in her father's last will. How happily her father's intentions are attained is proved by the beautiful words, emanating from the purest feminine nature, with which Portia resigns herself and all her possessions to her newly married husband. Her wealth would only have proved fatal, had not her father's will brought her to the consciousness of those moral ties which unite society, ties which the most worldly independent cannot withdraw from, without being in danger of perishing by immoral selfishness and hardness of heart, like Shylock. Portia does indeed occasionally grumble at the constraint laid upon her, and complains of the 'naughty times' which keep owners from their rights; but this happens at a moment of excitement, such as every one is exposed to. Her true resolution she expresses in Act I. 2: 'If I should be as old as Sybilla, I will die chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will.' When quietly reflecting she is im-

pressed with the wisdom and kindness of her father's command—Nerissa also agrees with her—and the faithfulness with which she lives up to it, is one of the most beautiful traits in her character. We do not need to rack our brains as to what would have happened had an untoward occurrence, such as sometimes spoils even the most prudential arrangements, caused a conflict; the poet, in drawing the characters of the lovers and in describing the caskets, has taken care that no such fear shall arise in our minds; on the contrary, from the beginning we feel confident in the victory of true love. Portia's whole being is founded on truth and goodness, and as it was the intention of her father's arrangement to guard her against untruth, she cannot but harmonise with it. The conditions at the selection of the caskets serve to frighten away unworthy and unpleasant wooers, like the capering Frenchman, the drunken German, and the Neapolitan dilettante in the art of horse-shoeing. To give it in a few words, the father did not wish that Portia should become the prey of a lover who seeks in marriage only outward, not inward happiness, who loves her possessions, not her person. And yet—strange contradiction!—it is just Bassanio who undertakes the journey to Belmont to obtain the 'Golden Fleece,' whereas this motive can scarcely be attributed to the Prince of Arragon or to the Prince of Morocco, for they had their own royal possessions. Bassanio is not only poor but greatly in debt, and has already cost Antonio a good deal of money; this he now intends to recover, much in the same way as, when a boy, he shot two arrows one after the other, and found both again. This new riddle can

only be solved thus, that Bassanio, in spite of his youthful follies and his extravagances, has preserved a firm and true character; he does not only love Portia's wealth, but herself still more. He has merely sown his wild oats, and the inference which Portia draws from his character in favour of Antonio, may just as appropriately be inverted to Bassanio's favour. He excels the whole group which surrounds Antonio; according to Launcelot's version of the proverb, he has the grace of God, while Shylock has enough. Even in regard to rank the poet seems to place him above the rest. He is not merely connected with Antonio by cordial friendship, but by relationship also; Salanio calls him 'your most noble kinsman,' when speaking of him to Antonio. Antonio's enthusiastic affection for him has something fatherly in it, and the relation between them is an exact imitation of that subsisting between Messer Ansaldo and Giannetto; Antonio's wish to see his favourite once more before his death, is taken almost word for word from the Pecorone.

In how far Antonio stands in contrast to Shylock has been sufficiently explained by Gervinus. To Shylock possession itself is everything, to Antonio nothing, not even a means for the enjoyment of life. Shylock lives and gains for himself only, Antonio for others only. Shylock stands isolated as it were, for Tubal and Chus are merely his tools in business; Antonio, on the contrary, is surrounded by a number of friends and followers, the majority of whom, it is true, may have been attracted by his wealth; but they are all filled with sincere respect and cordial sympathy for him, and do not turn their backs upon him in the hour

of need, as Timon's parasites do. Antonio's sole pleasure consists in seeing these 'butterflies' merry and of good cheer, and they on their part endeavour to enliven him. Why he should be melancholy he himself does not know, nor do his friends; simply because he is not cheerful. The fact is, that wealth has blunted his feelings, has satiated and made him effeminate; fulfilment, where it has not preceded, has immediately followed all his desires; what is there left for him to desire? Besides, he has no family for whose future he would have to provide, and in whose success he could take delight. In this respect he stands likewise in an isolated position, in spite of his friends, and a perfect indifference, not only to property, but to life itself, has taken possession of him; it is only for Bassanio's sake that he still loves the world. Consequently he calmly resigns himself to his fate, and is quite willing to meet it, if only the Jew will cut deep enough; he feels himself too weak to survive the loss of his wealth.

> For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
> Than is her custom; it is still her use,
> To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
> To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
> An age of poverty: from which lingering penance
> Of such misery doth she cut me off.

He feels that he is—

> the tainted wether of the flock,
> Meetest for death; the weakest kind of fruit
> Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me.

Thus he is full of soft-heartedness, gentleness, and kindliness, and it is only in relation to Shylock that he does not display these excellences of his nature. Gervinus, however much he is prejudiced against Shylock,

cannot help admitting that the affliction and deathly terror which Antonio has to endure are a well deserved punishment, and may serve him as a lesson. This is again a masterly stroke of Shakespeare, that he does not make Antonio suffer innocently, as is the case with Messer Ansaldo in the Pecorone, who does not offend the Jew of Mestre by one word of abuse.

Amidst the sounds of intoxicating music and the fragrance of the glorious flowers of southern climes, all the principal characters of the play, with the exception of Shylock, meet at Belmont. Portia, the most prominent of all, gives Antonio the glad tidings that three of his galleons have arrived in the roads, and by this news recalls him completely back to life. Little Jessica, who cannot be merry at the sounds of sweet music—by the way, a trait which tells much in her favour—is, we hope, made all the happier by her father's will, which Nerissa brings. Even the ticklish episode of the rings (taken from the Pecorone) ends in exuberant merriment, and thus we find ourselves at the end of the play, which in spite of all that may be said, we will guard in its imperishable beauty as a dramatic jewel no less carefully than Bassanio and Gratiano guard the rings of their wives.

'ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.'

A LETTER ADDRESSED TO

GISBERT, BARON VINCKE.

(1872.)

It has seldom fallen to my lot, my dear Baron, to have been so vividly impressed by the force of the truism, that a dramatic poet can only be thoroughly understood by representation, as upon that pleasant evening when we first saw at Weimar your stage adaptation of 'All's Well that Ends Well.' A classical atmosphere of grace and beauty still surrounds the Weimar theatre, and reminds us of the days when, as it is beautifully and ingeniously painted on its ceiling, Goethe and Schiller introduced the great Englishman to Weimar, which ever since has done him the honours of the Fatherland, and may be regarded in this respect, as in others, as its worthy representative. The same atmosphere of poetical grace and beauty pervades your adaptation, which is therefore fully entitled to find a home at Goethe's theatre. It is true you have cut pretty deep into the substance of our favourite poet, but this cannot give rise to a dispute between conservative and radical critics, inasmuch as it is admitted on all hands that the play, as written by Shakespeare, cannot be represented on the modern stage. It seems as if we were

here separated from him by an impassable chasm, and as if his opponents here triumphantly held in their hands the proof of how antiquated he has become, how far we have advanced beyond the coarseness of his age, and what infinite progress we have made compared to him. So it seems, but apart from one or two of the dialogues, where the licentious humour—not Shakespeare's, but of the Elizabethan period—goes far beyond the measure now permitted, the impossibility of the play lies only in the point of the story, and you have shown how this may be changed not only into an unobjectionable but even an attractive one, without detriment to the essential substance of the play, to the dramatic structure, or the characters. And should you, as an adapter, in the opinion of one or other of the orthodox Shakespeare worshippers, really have deviated too far from the original, yet such a one cannot but welcome your work as a free imitation. The play, it is true, even after the removal of the objectionable parts, has something strange and not exactly sympathetic to our feelings; but the more deeply we enter into it, the more we are impressed by the conviction that the poet here too develops a truth and subtlety in the delineation of the characters, and a psychological penetration, which seems to raise this comedy almost to a level with the creations of his maturest years. The representation at Weimar has called forth in me various reflections on this head, which I here lay before you as their 'onlie begetter' for further consideration.

This comedy has in fact hitherto maintained a rather obstinate attitude in regard to æsthetic criticism, which

has not succeeded in discovering an ideal unity or a connecting fundamental idea in the variously interwoven threads of the plot, or in the apparently loose composition. As will hereafter be seen, the attempt made by Gervinus is a failure. Ulrici, who does not enter upon an analysis of the characters, finds the spiritual centre in the freedom of love, which, as he says, so long as it has not freed itself from arbitrariness, is at the same time its own weakness; so that it either degenerates into arrogance and perversity, or into blind wilfulness and pride. From this point of view, he objects to the composition, and thinks that it is not so successful as most of the poet's later comedies; several of the characters, he says, such as the Countess, the Duke of Florence, Lafeu and Parolles, Violenta and Mariana, certainly take an external part in the plot, but have no internal share in the meaning and significance of the play. It is curious that these are the very characters which exclusively owe their existence to the poet's invention. Apart from the fact that two of the principal characters — the Countess and Parolles—are thereby placed on a level with very subordinate personages—Violenta is even only a dummy —this confession must raise a doubt as to whether Ulrici's point of view can be the right one, for it leads to a result which would cast an unjustifiable blame on Shakespeare's art. It rather appears as if in the choice of a different starting point this very drama offered a very clear insight into the poet's mental laboratory, as if it showed more clearly than many other of his creations, what he considered the ideal unity, and what was the formative principle that guided him

in the construction of the dramatic edifice. In a word, the point Shakespeare starts from is the psychological problem of the principal character, which of inner necessity not merely determines the course of the plot, but all the other characters of the piece as well. This psychological problem, or, if you prefer it, this delineation of the principal character, the fathoming of its origin, the course of its development, the tragic conflict to which it leads, this at all times formed the chief attraction to Shakespeare, and one which he could never resist. Old St. Evremond, who lived in England for many years, and acquired there as thorough an understanding of the English drama as it is possible for a Frenchman to do, in his Essay 'De la Comédie Angloise,' makes the remark 'que les Anglois renoncent presque toujours à l'unité d'action, pour représenter une personne principale, qui les divertit par des actions différentes.'[1] In regard to the great tragic characters such as Lear, Hamlet, Othello, Richard III., Macbeth, and Coriolanus, an impartial observer scarcely requires a proof of this observation; but in comedy also, i.e. in character comedy, the poet has pursued the same course, as is especially evident in 'The Merchant of Venice,' and in the play now under discussion. The question may indeed be raised as to how far 'All's Well that Ends Well' really answers to our ideas of comedy, and whether the characters of Parolles and the Clown are not the only ones that justify this title; a humorous view of the world seems discernible only by a forced proceeding, and according to our modern distinction the play is a drama rather than a comedy.

[1] Oeuvres de M. St. Evremond (Londres, 1711), iii. 198.

Kreyssig[1] very justly remarks that the plot of this comedy is as heavy as the laws of the species permit, and that it contains complications in which tragic dissonances were as easily attainable to the poet as the cheerful solution actually given. While Coleridge, Knight, and Gervinus are led astray by the conviction —right enough in itself—that we have to recognise Meres' 'Love's Labour's Won' in 'All's Well that Ends Well,' and erroneously contrast it with 'Love's Labour's Lost,' Kreyssig finds that 'All's Well that Ends Well' stands in the closest relationship with the 'Taming of the Shrew.' 'It is the relative power of Man and Woman,' he says, 'an inexhaustible theme for comedy among all nations, in which the interest of both plays is centred.' Schlegel has also intimated something of the kind; nay, one might even come to think that it was by no means accidental that in the folio 'All's Well' follows directly upon the 'Taming of the Shrew,' but that the editors by this arrangement wished to hint at the fact that the two plays belong together. Both as regards the fundamental idea and the delineation of the characters, Kreyssig has anticipated some of the thoughts that first struck me at Weimar, and which I then expressed to you, so that I have again come to the discouraging knowledge how difficult it is to say anything new about Shakespeare.

What, then, did Shakespeare find in Boccaccio's novel, which he read in Paynter's translation? What was it that tempted him to dramatise it? It was evidently only the character of Giletta, who being filled with a burning love for Beltramo, undertakes to win

[1] Vorlesungen über Shakespeare (1860), iii. 148.

him herself, and actually succeeds in marrying him, although she succeeds in winning his love only after overcoming various obstacles by stratagem, which is as fair in love as in war. The story of this courtship, which is not tempered either by the motives or by the characters, makes upon us—to use Gervinus' severe words—the impression of 'boundless importunity,' and according to him is tolerable only in the novelist, with whom the 'credulous ear is a far more indulgent judge than the sharp eye of the spectator in front of the stage.' We should however not forget that the play must have given far less offence at a time when the subject of a girl following the man she loves was a favourite dramatic theme; we need only recall to mind the Spanish Theatre, 'Pastor Fido,' 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona,' &c. However that may be, Shakespeare was charmed by the story and the character of Giletta; such glowing and such faithful love could not but deeply affect him, and stir up within him many questions and considerations. Might not a woman's love in its fulness and sincerity claim the same right to gratification as a man's? Should her heart be condemned by nature to unbroken silence, and in the end sink in painful resignation? Should there be no way to secure to her also the realisation of her heart's desire? Helena herself expresses similar thoughts in the following words, in which she however in the first place thinks but of the difference of rank separating her from the man she loves:—

> Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
> Which we ascribe to heaven; the fated sky
> Gives us free scope, only doth backward pull
> Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.

> Impossible be strange attempts to those
> That weigh their pains with sense ; and do suppose
> That what hath been cannot be : who ever strove
> To show her merit, that did miss her love ?

Starting from reflections like these, Helena undertakes the 'strange attempt' to win the beloved man, and this shows why 'All's Well that Ends Well' could not be formed into a perfect comedy, whereas the 'Taming of the Shrew' is a comedy out and out. In the 'Taming of the Shrew' we have only a comic or burlesque exaggeration of the natural relation between man and woman, whereas here the reverse of this natural relation is attempted and poetically justified. The courting done by the woman goes, so to speak, against the grain; it is either simply repulsive or else it inclines to tragedy. After the poet had once chosen the subject, the main thing to be done certainly was to endeavour that the woman should as imperceptibly as possible pass the bounds assigned to her by nature and custom, for the man-woman, a modern emancipation heroine, would never have been a character for whom Shakespeare could have become enthusiastic, he who everywhere places genuine womanliness so high, who has created immortal ideals of feminine feeling and life, and to whom the idea of female emancipation was utterly foreign. An attempt was to be made, here was a problem which the great searcher of hearts could not resist; he had described courtship so often and from such different points of view, why not once from this point also? To introduce Boccaccio's Giletta as she was upon the stage was impossible, she would only have been an adventuress, exciting nothing but disgust. Shakespeare had to exert all his power in order to

create, out of the novelist's poor skeleton, a woman intelligible and sympathetic to us; he had to unfold her mental life, and to explain her actions by motives to which we could not refuse our sympathy. If Giletta was not to excite aversion by her unwomanly action, it was above all things necessary to mitigate her orphaned position, to place her in some connection with the family, in a word to give her a mother's support, as is appropriate and necessary for every young girl, especially if she be in love. In the given circumstances a real mother would by no means have been the most suitable person; what place would there have been for her, when Giletta or Helena, as Shakespeare has christened her, was Bertram's foster-sister? A mother moreover would not have been able to meet Bertram's objections in regard to the difference of rank; and, what is the main point, had she aided or even approved of her daughter undertaking the courtship, she would only too easily have appeared in the light of a match-maker. It was therefore one of Shakespeare's happiest hits to create the old Countess Roussillon, without whom the young Count would likewise have been an orphan. However, not merely the existence but the very character of the Countess is dependent upon Helena's enterprise; if Helena was to find a support in her, she must not be a person proud of her aristocratic descent, haughty, precise, severe, or even cold, but neither must she be timid and over-scrupulous—in fact, remembering her own youth, she must find reasons to sympathise with Helena.

> Even so it was with me when I was young:
> If we are nature's, these are ours; this thorn

Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong :
Our blood to us, this to our blood is born ;
It is the show and seal of nature's truth,
Where love's strong passion is impressed in youth :
By our remembrances of days foregone,
Such were our faults, or then we thought them none.

The Countess values Helena on account of her moral purity, her honesty, her clear understanding, her devotion, and her beauty ; she loves her as if she were her own daughter, and her affection and love only increase the further Helena advances in her attempt, so that the latter even eclipses the son in his own mother's affection :—

Which of them both
Is dearest to me, I have no skill in sense
To make distinction.

The Countess possesses sufficient experience of life to know that a noble character, a clear mind, and a faithful heart are far more essential requisites for a happy marriage than rank and riches ; she is penetrated with the conviction that she cannot find a more desirable daughter-in-law, and therefore not only gives her express permission to make the 'attempt,' but encourages her, furnishes her with money and trustworthy attendants, and assures her of her support in all things :

Begone to-morrow ; and be sure of this,
What I can help thee to, thou shalt not miss.

Even after her departure the Countess remains in communication with her by means of her Clown, whereby the latter becomes connected with the plot and rises above the superfluous position of a mere jester. In this respect I regret that, for other reasons, you have struck out the character of the Clown. All that makes Helena's

isolation less felt, all that links her to her home and to her motherly friend, as well as all that by which the sympathy and approval of the latter is expressed, must to my conviction be set forth and emphasized throughout.

But not only outwardly, it is also inwardly and in her very essence, that the poet represents Helena as womanly as possible. With humble self-reproaches she feels the distance between herself and her beloved, who seems to stand high beyond her reach, like a bright star.

> Thus, Indian-like,
> Religious in mine error, I adore
> The sun, that looks upon his worshipper,
> But knows of him no more.

Although it is a 'plague' constantly to behold her beloved and to draw his features upon her 'heart's table,' yet she is supremely happy in his presence, and remains silent so as not to 'follow him with any token of presumptuous suit.' She consoles herself with the thought that 'it hurts him not that he is loved by me:' it sounds very like Goethe's 'That I should love thee is no concern of thine,'[1]—but is more tender and womanly. His departure causes her passion to burst forth; she cannot endure to be separated from him, and to know him exposed to the temptations of the court, where she cannot but fear that she will lose him for ever. It is this separation which already with the novelist served as an incitement for Helena to take the first step, and this first step is necessarily followed by all the succeeding ones, up to the union of the two. In Helena the oppressive consciousness of the difference

[1] 'Wenn ich dich liebe, was geht es dich an.'

of rank is now counterbalanced by the strong feeling and energetic resolution that she may come to deserve the man she loves; her merit shall make up for her want of rank. I can only conditionally agree with Kreyssig, in whose opinion Helena's nature is above all strong-willed and intelligent. Helena's strength of will is always directed but to one point—that of winning the man she loves. Directly upon receiving his hand she recedes to the most unobtrusive feminine position, and gives way to his harsh commands with a submissiveness that reminds us of Griselda. It is evident that her strength of will and energy only tend to bring her to a position where she will require them no longer; she only leaves the limits of womanhood in order to be able afterwards to remain all the more retired within them. She says it in unmistakeable words:—

> and I
> His servant live, and will his vassal die:
> He must not be my brother.

And she does nothing that could make us doubt the sincerity of this intention. She by no means wishes to become Countess Roussillon for the sake of the worldly advantages which would thereby accrue to her; she desires nothing but her beloved and his love. She soars to enthusiastic masculine activity so long as this object has to be fought for, and, as soon as it is attained, relapses into the unselfish humility of a woman. We cannot think otherwise but that hers was originally a gentle, quiet, modest nature, and that her strength of will and energy are exclusively the result of her passionate love. Had Bertram, before his departure, been able to read the silent secret of her love in her eyes,

had he found a corresponding emotion in his own breast and accordingly made the first advance, she would never have ventured beyond the bounds of womanhood. After Bertram has gone to Florence she torments herself with the self-accusation that it is her importunate love that has driven him from his country and exposed him to the dangers of pitiless warfare, and her pretended pilgrimage is undertaken with the intention of clearing the way for his return. She forms no plan how to fulfil his seemingly impossible conditions, but the plan naturally presents itself to her while on the road.

To cure the King serves Helena simply as a means to her object, as she does not hesitate openly to confess to the Countess.

> My lord your son made me to think of this ;
> Else Paris, and the medicine, and the king
> Had from the conversation of my thoughts
> Haply been absent then.

But this cure may in some measure be also regarded as the shadow which the principal event casts before itself. Although the King has known and highly valued Helena's father, he nevertheless guards himself against her receipt exactly as Bertram afterwards guards himself against her love. It is true that this feature occurs in the novel, but Shakespeare might without difficulty have removed it had it not served his purpose ; instead of doing this he has strengthened it! It would have been so much more natural to let the love of life which is innate in all men, be aroused in the mind of the invalid, had it not been that Helena was here to become accustomed to the struggle with the obstacles before her. The less easy she finds it to conquer the King's

hopeless disbelief in her medicine, the more she will feel herself encouraged by the victory, and will meet the chief task which is before her with strengthened self-confidence. Not only does she effect a happy cure upon the King, but afterwards succeeds in doing the same upon Bertram. At court, too, Helena, in the most difficult of situations, preserves the tone and gentle nobility of a perfect woman; her appearance as a doctor immensely differs from the conduct of our latest emancipated ladies who force themselves as 'lady-doctors' into the sphere of men; and she bears herself in as womanly a manner as her position and project admit of, except in one point, and that certainly the most important. For in the novel it is the King who offers to give Giletta a husband as a reward for the happily completed cure, and in deference to our modern ways of feeling you have justly followed the novel in this point. In Shakespeare on the contrary, the King makes no such offer, but Helena candidly and freely answers his question as to what she would like as a reward: a husband. Why has the poet herein deviated from the novel? Why does he here make his heroine, outwardly at least, to appear more unwomanly than Boccaccio's? As far as I can see, two reasons induced him to do this. First he wishes to show her love in all its strength and irresistibleness, and secondly, the novelist's evasion may not have seemed to him in accordance with that truth which he—not only in the character of Helena, but throughout all his works—holds up as the chief of all virtues. Nothing is more hateful to him than the varnished world, nothing more repulsive than crooked ways. Like an arrow flying to its goal, Helena

pursues her object with directest resolution. She makes as little secret of her love to the King as she did to the Countess. Had the poet made her go by crooked ways and screen her intention, he would with difficulty have kept her clear of the suspicion that she was striving after worldly advantages, that she thought more about becoming Countess Roussillon, than of becoming Bertram's wife. 'She derives her honesty and achieves her goodness,' says the Countess to Lafeu, and the honesty of her family, particularly that of her late father, is repeatedly emphasized. The stratagem, or the deceit which she afterwards at Florence practises upon Bertram, in the poet's eye does not cast any blemish on her honesty; he does not leave us in doubt as to what he thinks of it. At the conclusion of the third act the widow calls it 'a lawful deceit,' and Helena says:—

> Which, if it speed,
> Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed,
> And lawful meaning in a lawful act,
> Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact.

With the same perfect frankness Helena confesses this deceit also before all the company in the concluding scene. Apart from the fact that without this resource —suggested by the novel—the conditions imposed by Bertram could not possibly have been complied with, we meet with the same artful expedient also in 'Measure for Measure,' without its being derogatory to the honesty of Mariana and Isabella.

Helena's character not only determines that of the Countess, but above all, the second psychological problem, that of the man beloved of and won by her. Bertram's character, as well as that of the Countess, is so

necessarily the result of hers, that the poet had no choice left. If Helena's suit was to succeed, she could not be made to act upon a strong, decided, self-conscious, and mature manly character, for such a one would already have made his own choice or would not choose —least of all would he allow himself to be chosen and courted. Bertram could not be made in the least degree like Petruchio, who has been so steeled and tried by the dangers of war and by his adventures by land and sea, that the taming of a refractory girl appears an easy matter to him. Helena can only come off victorious over a youth still unripe and unformed, wavering undecidedly between appearance and reality, who neither knows himself nor the world, one who as yet has no important task, no great object to serve him as a guide in life, and who has not yet been led into a fixed path of life by a love of his own choosing. Now such a one Bertram appears throughout, however excellently nature may have endowed him both physically and mentally. The King receives him with the words :—

> Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face ;
> Frank nature, rather curious than in haste,
> Hath well composed thee. Thy father's moral parts
> Mayst thou inherit too !

His father's moral parts, in him, are however overgrown with all kinds of youthful weeds, so that his good qualities have been prevented from attaining their proper development. His own mother overlooks his good points and is never tired of scolding him for his faults. She calls him 'a rude boy,' a 'rash and unbridled boy,' and even threatens not to recognise him

any longer as her son. 'He was my son,' she says to Helena,

> But I do wash his name out of my blood,
> And thou art all my child.

Bertram, to a certain extent, is the reverse of Petruchio; just as the latter wins and tames Katherine against her will, so he is won against his; he is a wild colt caught and tamed by Helena. Although he is to be conceived her senior by one or two years—he is just coming of age—yet he very naturally does not as yet possess her maturity of morals and feeling, and arrives at it only by the influence of love. In the impetuosity of youth he rushes out into the world; he will not remain at court, but wants to win his spurs in war, and is much annoyed that the King refuses to give him leave to do so. We cannot exactly blame him for objecting to the King's command to marry; even though Helena clothes her choice in the most delicate and womanly language possible :—

> I dare not say I take you; but I give
> Me and my service, ever whilst I live,
> Into your guiding power. This is the man—

he is right in wishing to preserve his freedom in love, this most personal and most decisive matter, on which the whole happiness of a life depends. Here we unequivocally see which is the natural relation : the man has the right of choice, the woman the right of refusal.[1] This Helena knows and feels very well. Now, when the woman assumes the right of courting, must not the

[1] Compare 'Midsummer-Night's Dream,' II. 2 :

> We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
> We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.

man be permitted to refuse? But what then becomes of her? Helena tells us :—

> The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper me,—
> 'We blush, that thou should'st choose; but, be refus'd,
> Let the white death sit on thy cheek for ever;
> We'll ne'er come there again.'

The King therefore has to use force, to which he is entitled both as lord of the land and as Bertram's guardian. Bertram under this constraint behaves like an inconsiderate and defiant boy; he has neither a friendly word for Helena, whom he at least should not refuse to respect, nor a conciliatory one for the King, who has always been his father's friend and his own kind guardian. Might he not have asked for time to consider the King's wish? Instead of this he banishes his wife from his sight and enjoins her untruthfully to inform the King that she undertakes from her own free will the journey imposed upon her by her husband. Hertzberg[1] imagines to have found the true reason of Bertram's refusal in the fact that the latter, with all the ardour of youth, loves another lady in whom all his thoughts and feelings are centred, and that this lady, the choice of his own heart, is no other than Lafeu's daughter, whom he is to marry in the last act. Pleasant as it is to me at all times to find myself of one mind with my learned and ingenious friend Hertzberg, yet it is impossible for me here to share his opinion. Did the matter stand thus, Bertram would surely have expressed his sentiments the more readily as he would thus have most securely protected himself

[1] Shakespeare's Works, translated by Schlegel and Tieck, edited by the German Shakespeare Society, xi. 353.

against the enforced marriage with Helena, though this would certainly have spoiled the poet's plot—at least I cannot see how matters could have proceeded. If Hertzberg were right, it would be inconceivable that Lafeu, who in a subdued voice accompanies the whole scene of the choice by remarks of his own, should not make one allusion to such a fact. It would be inconceivable that Bertram, even afterwards, should not once think of this well-beloved Maudlin, but in Diana's arms should become unfaithful to her without any pangs of conscience. Finally, it would be inconceivable that Helena should possess no knowledge of such a connection—women are very sharp-sighted in these matters. She, on the contrary, assures the King that she will choose one—

> whom I know
> *Is free for me to ask*, thee to bestow!

What blame would not thus be cast upon Helena, as well as upon Bertram, had she even unwittingly induced him to break faith with a lady, and had she then occupied her place! The supposition is not compatible either with her character or with his. Bertram, in fact, first learns what true love is through Helena. Hertzberg himself admits that the passage in the fifth act which forms the sole ground for his argument, is not at all clear, but that 'it moves in pompous and exquisite metaphors and metonymies with a vague participial construction, hesitatingly inserted into the sentence by an ambiguous pronominal adverb, between which the correct relation of the twice-used pronoun *she*—referring however to two different persons—is easily concealed.' One might be inclined to think that the passage had

only been stuck in by the poet at the last moment, or in a later revision 'for the nonce,' without regard to what precedes. The supposition of Gervinus, that Bertram in distant haughtiness has only cast a cursory glance at Maudlin, is as little acceptable as that of Hertzberg. The correct explanation seems to me, that the King has once dropped a hint that the two children might be suitably matched; Lafeu tells the Countess that it was a proposal 'which, in the minority of them both, his majesty out of a self-gracious remembrance did first propose.' Lafeu likes all the more to refer to this plan when he perceives that Bertram will not dare to oppose the King a second time, and that he thus has every chance of getting his daughter married. Bertram himself has the less objection to the young girl, because she is probably quite a stranger to him. For how are we to suppose that he made her acquaintance? We should have to believe that he had stayed at court for some time when a boy; such a supposition however would neither accord with his being 'an unseasoned courtier,' as his mother calls him, nor with the pathetic and affectionate farewell with which she dismisses him from his father's roof. She is evidently not yet accustomed to his absence, otherwise she would not have found it so hard to part with him. Also the King, when welcoming Bertram, says nothing that could be interpreted in this sense, his words, on the contrary, seem to betray that he sees him for the first time. On the other hand Lafeu certainly behaves in the Countess' house in a manner that would lead us to suppose that it is not his first appearance there, and it is not impossible that he may on a former visit have brought

his daughter with him. Be that as it may, Bertram has in no case taken an intense liking to, or fallen passionately in love with Maudlin, and her image, if ever it found entrance into his heart, is completely effaced in the tumult of the Italian war.

Bertram's behaviour towards Helena is no less haughty and defiant after he has had to accept her as wife from the King's hands than before. This encroachment on his personal rights wounds him all the more deeply because arrogant pride and exaggerated consciousness of his rank are among his most prominent failings. His father too is described by the King as being very proud of his aristocratic descent. Those—

> who were below him
> He used as creatures of another place
> And bowed his eminent top to their low ranks,
> Making them proud of his humility,
> In their poor praise he humbled.

But that which in the father had become softened by experience in life and self-culture, appears in the son in all the repulsiveness of immaturity. Helena, as already said, with deepest humility at first considered the difference of their rank as the chief obstacle in the way of her wishes; afterwards, however, she overlooks this circumstance, and the King himself does not object to her birth, he not only allows her to choose from among the cavaliers of his court, but even assures her that they are all of noble descent. He considers Bertram's scruples on this score as unimportant, and directs his attention to the fact that this objection may easily be removed by the King's royal prerogative. He scolds him rather severely for his pride, and tells him in plain

words that external honour stands far beneath that true honour within us which is the result of our own deeds and virtues.

> From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,
> The place is dignified by the doer's deed :
> Where great additions swell, and virtue none,
> It is a dropsied honour . . . .
> If thou can'st like this creature as a maid,
> I can create the rest : virtue and she
> Is her own dower ; honour and wealth from me.

The Countess entertains no more doubts about the humble birth of her daughter-in-law than the King; she is rather inclined to think that Helena is too good for her son :—

> She deserves a lord
> That twenty such rude boys might tend upon,
> And call her hourly, mistress.

She calls her too virtuous for even an emperor to despise her. 'It hath happened all as I would have had it, save that he comes not along with her,' she says when speaking of Helena's return. Even Parolles, who of course sides with Bertram against Helena, never makes any allusion to her humble rank. Thus Bertram's haughtiness meets on all sides with the severest censure, and I cannot therefore agree with Gervinus in finding the spiritual centre of the play, and the nucleus of the difference between the two characters of Bertram and Helena, to lie in the difference of rank. This would moreover leave unexplained why Bertram leaves his betrothed bride after the King has made her his equal in rank and fortune. Her promotion must surely have broken his resistance and aversion, had they not rested upon some other reason beyond that of

their difference in station. Nay, he even declares to the King his satisfaction on this point:—

> When I consider
> What great creation, and what dole of honour
> Flies where you bid it, I find that she, which late
> Was in my nobler thoughts most base, is now
> The praised of the king; who, so ennobled,
> Is, as 'twere, born so.

Or are we to suppose this a falsehood? It would indeed not be the only one of which he is guilty; however, upon well considering all things, such an interpretation does not seem to be justifiable.

In trying to form an estimate of Bertram's character we must not overlook the reflex cast upon him by his friend and mentor, Parolles. Tell me who are your friends, and I shall tell you what you are, says a German proverb. So much stress is laid on the significance of Parolles in this respect in the course of the play, that I cannot help being convinced, against Ulrici, that he indeed forms an essential part in the sense and meaning of it. Parolles moreover was necessary for the sake of symmetry; he is placed by Bertram's side, as the Countess by Helena's, and as the latter shows us what will eventually become of Helena, so Parolles reveals to us—only partially, it is true—the errors into which Bertram may fall, if Helena does not succeed in reclaiming him. In a word, the Countess and Parolles are the projections of Helena's and Bertram's characters. You will agree that this is not looking at Bertram in too unfavourable a light, if you bear in mind that even in the concluding scene he does not consider it beneath his dignity to deceive the King; how far he essentially differs from Parolles we shall directly see. Parolles,

whom, I may mention in passing, the poet represents as a thorough Frenchman, is, according to the Countess' words, 'a very tainted fellow and full of wickedness;' in Diana's eyes he is—

> that same knave
> That leads him (viz. Bertram) to these places; were I his lady
> I would poison that vile rascal.

Finally, as Mariana gives it, he plays the part of 'a filthy officer in those suggestions for the young Earl.' That Shakespeare at the same time employs him as a comic personage, only shows the greatness of his skill. Bertram's allowing himself to be guided and led astray by the hollow, boastful, and immoral fellow, with his plausible exterior, proves more distinctly than anything else his want of knowledge of human nature and the mental and moral immaturity under which he is labouring. He is the last to see through the Monsieur, and it is almost only by force and against his own will that his eyes are opened, just as it is only by force and against his own will that he is led to see the true virtue and love in Helena's character. Helena, although she has as yet seen nothing of the world, from the first perceives Parolles to be a good-for-nothing; she forms a truly feminine opinion of him—his self-confidence, his captivating manners, and his ever ready wit, make her overlook his faults, nay, she almost loves him for Bertram's sake. The first who finds out the Monsieur is the experienced courtier Lafeu, a fact which cannot imply blame upon young Bertram, who has just as it were entered life. The brothers Dumaine, however, although they are of the same, or but little his seniors in age, prove themselves much better connoisseurs of

human nature; they are in fact placed by Bertram's side, his companions in rank and age, so as to serve as a standard for estimating his character; like the older personages of the play they disapprove Bertram's shaking off 'so good a wife and so sweet a lady,' and blame his seducing Diana. The unmasking of Parolles is not merely, as Schlegel says, one of 'the best comic scenes ever invented,' but at the same time has the deeper meaning of giving Bertram the first impulse to a mental conversion. A like effect is produced by his mother's letter of warning which arrives at the same time, and at the perusal of which, according to the words of one of the Dumaines, Bertram becomes 'changed almost into another man.' Here lies the turning-point of Bertram's character. According to my feeling the poet might have brought it much clearer before the hearer's or reader's understanding by a monologue from Bertram; but according to Gervinus' appropriate remark, he has 'rather expressed it silently in the characters and actions,' and indeed more so in this play than is usually his way. There can be no doubt that Bertram's thoughts turn from the unmasked Parolles—who feigned friendship for selfish and mean purposes—to Helena whom he believes dead, the only one who has shown him unselfish love, and who has proved herself sincere and true. His relation to Diana does not contradict this; it is but an intoxication of the senses, and in excuse of the treatment which he afterwards bestows upon her it may be pleaded that he is driven to the suspicion that like Parolles she intended to rob him; did she not begin by asking for the 'monumental ring' of his house?

The most favourable, nay, we might almost say the only favourable side of Bertram's character, is as a warrior; here he proves his noble nature, and is the opposite of Parolles, whom in this point, even in the worst case, he could never have resembled. In fact we here find another principle for comparing the two characters which Shakespeare frequently makes use of —that of contrast. On Bertram's side we have bravery with its honour, on Parolles' side cowardice and the consequent want of honour. Bertram has done good service and distinguished himself, as we learn not merely from the Florentine women, but which we hear confirmed from the mouth of the Duke of Florence himself. The letters of recommendation which the latter gives him on his departure, open his return to France and regain him the King's favour. This seems to bring him into a good way, and we indulge in the hope that all will turn out well; all the more unexpected and unsatisfactory therefore is the unfavourable impression which he makes in the concluding scene. I cannot help wishing that the poet had unravelled this intricate knot in a more pleasing manner. When we compare how the character of Katharine in the 'Taming of the Shrew' has been led to a reconciling conversion, how in her incomparable concluding speech she resumes her right position as a woman, we cannot help all the more regretting that the poet, from the above-mentioned turning-point, has not disclosed the nobler kernel of Bertram's character more perceptibly, step by step, and at the conclusion, when he is purified from his faults and matured in experience, has not led him to Helena with a corresponding confession of repentance.

An attempt in this direction would, in my opinion, be an object to be aimed at in a stage arrangement of the work; that we should thus be removed a step further from the original would not be a matter of much consequence in a play where exceptional freedom has to be granted to the adapter. It is worthy of remark that in the 'Taming' also, the change and purification of Katharine's character, up to the concluding scene is drawn almost imperceptibly, whereas the two characters of Petruchio and Helena seem to have engrossed the poet's whole care and interest. In the 'Taming' however this want is less offensive than in 'All's Well that Ends Well,' for in the former, on account of the natural truth of the relation in which the chief characters stand to each other, we are in no doubt as to the change which the man's action must produce on the woman. Bertram's conduct in the very confusing complication of the fifth act is such that the King believes him capable of the worst and even sends him to prison, whereas Lafeu becomes convinced that Bertram's reputation is not sufficient for his daughter, and flings the bitter words at him, 'You are no husband for my daughter—I will buy me a son-in-law in a fair.' Bertram's final conversion suffers from the same surprising and unsatisfactory suddenness which we meet with in a still more unpleasant form in the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' and elsewhere. It is Helena alone who, in the midst of the confusion, remains faithful to the husband whom she has won. She feels that even the best men 'are moulded out of faults,' as the poet makes Mariana express it in 'Measure for Measure,' under still more trying circumstances, and that they become

all the better 'for being a little bad.' She believes in the man she loves, and we take leave of the couple in the hope that their marriage will turn to good—'All's Well that Ends Well.'

Thus it seems to me that the various parts of the play all work well together, and that they stand in a firm intrinsic connection with one another. The root—if I may be permitted to use this image—out of which the whole grows forth like a vegetable organism, is and remains the character of and the courtship by Helena, which the poet, as I have already remarked, has taken up as a psychological problem, and to which all the other characters are placed in inner relation. If we find a few butterflies resting on the leaves of this flower, what does it matter? In no play,—unless indeed it were composed according to the poor model of the classical French tragedy—can such subordinate characters be placed in inner relation to its spiritual centre. Lafeu, however, should not be regarded as one of these superfluous personages, as he is the connecting link between the King an the Roussillon family, and tries to catch Bertram for his daughter: moreover the King must, after all, have a master of the ceremonies. The only dispensable personage would be the Duke of Florence; but Shakespeare scatters such by-matter about in profusion, and Schlegel is quite right in remarking of this very play, that the poet is rich to extravagance.

The undeniable excellences in the composition and the delineation of character make me feel inclined not to fix the date of the play at too early a period, all the more so as the imitation of the Italian style already

shows signs of decrease. The peculiarities of style and diction, however, seem to point to opposite directions and have produced such an uncertainty of opinions in regard to the question of date, as is scarcely the case with any other of the poet's plays. For while Malone refers it to the year 1606,[1] Knight reckons it among those comedies which can in no way be proved not to have been written before 1590. Midway stand Drake and Chalmers, who assume the date to be 1598 or 1599. Gervinus and Baron von Friesen[2] consider 'All's Well that Ends Well,' as among the poet's earliest creations, but think it to have been subsequently remodelled, whereas Hertzberg, from grammatical and metrical reasons, opposes this plausible hypothesis, and declares our comedy to be a late production; he dates it at 1603. According to him, 'Love's Labour's Won,' is the 'Taming of the Shrew,' which is in so far very improbable, as Shakespeare in remodelling his earlier plays never altered their titles. Moreover to Petruchio the taming is more of a pleasure than a labour or trouble. Ulrici has pointed out the difficulty into which Drake has fallen. For if—as Drake justly maintains—our play be the 'Love's Labour's Won' mentioned by Meres, it seems, if not inconceivable, at least highly improbable, that the play should have been brought out in the same year with Meres' pamphlet. According to Mr. Halliwell[3] 'Love's Labour's Won' has been lost. From the identity of 'All's Well that Ends Well' and 'Love's Labour's Won,' which is

[1] Malone has also wavered; first he assumed the year 1598.

[2] Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, ii. 48 seqq.

[3] Life of Shakespeare, 188.

assumed by the great majority of Shakespearean scholars, this at least is evident, that the play in their opinion must have been written before 1598, nay we might even conclude that it must have been brought on the stage only a short time before that year. For if the poet had given it the double title of 'Love's Labour's Won, or All's Well that Ends Well,' and if the public had chosen the latter appellation, this would assuredly have taken place not long after the representation of the play on the stage. The same holds good if we suppose Shakespeare to have given his play but the one title of 'Love's Labour's Won,' and either his players or his public to have substituted the other. In either case it seems clear that Meres could cite the poet's sole or principal title only at a time when the other was not yet sanctioned either by Shakespeare himself or by the stage. But 'All's Well that Ends Well' may also have occupied the first place in the double title, or there may have been no double title at all, and the alteration may have been made by the poet himself during a revision of the play.[1] All this is so enveloped in uncertainty that we cannot even obtain a hint as to the date of the play, except that it must have been written after the 'Taming,' which is proved by the relation in which the two plays stand to one another. But to what year is the 'Taming of the Shrew' to be assigned?

[1] That 'All's Well that Ends Well' was a proverbial saying, is shown by the following passage in Samuel Rowley's 'Noble Soldier' (Sign. H, 2 verso) :—

King. What think'st thou of this great day, Balthasar?
Balth. Of this day? why as of a new play, if it ends well, all's well.

Another clue for determining the date might perhaps be found in the ring presented to Helena by the King, of which he says in the concluding scene :—

> If her fortune ever stood
> Necessitated to help, that by this token
> I would relieve her.

This reminds us involuntarily of the well-known story in which Elizabeth is said to have given a ring to her favourite Essex, after his expedition to Cadiz, with the same intention ; which ring, however, at Essex's condemnation, when its potency was to have been proved, was intercepted by the Duchess of Nottingham. I do not know the source of this story, and therefore cannot say whether Shakespeare could have been acquainted with it, and whether perhaps he alluded to it. The circumstance seems not unworthy of further enquiry, although it cannot be denied that the gift of a ring is frequently made use of in dramatic fables, and, if my memory does not fail me, occurs even before Shakespeare's day.[1] It is strange that we hear of the ring only in the last act, for Diana's intimation that she will give Bertram a ring in exchange for his ancestral one, tells nothing of its origin. We should have expected to have had the occurrence mentioned before Helena leaves the court, even if we did not ourselves witness it. Was this ring perhaps not introduced into the fifth act until at a later remodelling, somewhat in the same way as Maudlin Lafeu ? If this remodelling be assigned to the year 1597, or even to 1605–6, as Gervinus maintains, the poet might

[1] In Samuel Rowley's 'When You See Me, You Know Me,' and in Shakespeare's 'King Henry VIII.' a ring is given, but to a different purpose. Compare Hunter's 'Illustrations,' ii. 109.

quite well have been acquainted with the story of the ring given by Elizabeth to Essex. But as you see, here too we cannot arrive even at a probability.

Allow me to mention one more point, although it scarcely promises a chronological result. I allude to the remarkable points of resemblance between 'All's Well that Ends Well' and 'Hamlet.' Lafeu and his daughter remind us of Polonius and Ophelia, and curiously enough, both girls have lost their mother. Lafeu stands in the same relation to Polonius as Parolles to Falstaff; both have been put in the shade by their celebrated successors (or predecessors). The precepts which the Countess gives her son at parting are a striking pendant to the precepts enforced on Laertes by Polonius. The resemblance extends even to individual thoughts and modes of expression. 'Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead, excessive grief the enemy of the living,' says Lafeu, joining in with the Countess' caution, 'not to affect a sorrow.' Does not this remind you of the more elaborate exhortation which King Claudius addresses to Hamlet, and the more so as both passages are devoted to the expression of sorrow for a father's loss?

> 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
> To give these mourning duties to your father:
> . . . . . But to persever
> In obstinate condolement, is a course
> Of impious stubbornness, &c.

'Parolles thinks 'France a stable,' a 'dog-hole,' Hamlet considers Denmark a 'prison.' The Corambus enumerated amongst others by Parolles in his treacherous confession, brings to mind the Corambis of the first edition of 'Hamlet.' In the scene where two

gentlemen are the bearers of letters from Bertram to the Countess and Helena, we read :—

Sec. Gent. We serve you, madam;
In that, and all your worthiest affairs.
Count. Not so, but as we change our courtesies, &c.

of which there is a parallel in 'Hamlet' :—

Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.
Ham. Sir, my good friend, I'll change that name with you.

Lastly, in the assemblage of the cavaliers of the court, Helena says to the first lord : 'Thanks, sir; all the rest is mute,' which recalls Hamlet's celebrated words when dying, 'The rest is silence.'

In Baron von Friesen's essay already referred to, where the name Corambus is the only one of all these resemblances mentioned, the author finds himself led to the supposition that 'All's Well that Ends Well' may be of the same date as the original 'Hamlet,' without however 'seriously venturing to make such an assertion.' We are, in fact, here involved in a false circle of conjectures. But in how far can we in general be certain about the chronology of Shakespeare's dramas except on the ground of more or less well supported conjectures? If we could calculate the progress of a poet or an artist with mathematical accuracy, and reduce it to a formula, we should, in the case of Shakespeare, not want the means of forming a progressive course of his dramas with tolerable probability. However, although I am in no way inclined to apply Humboldt's celebrated remark—that the history of the world ascends in curves—to a poet's onward course, yet every great poet on some occasion makes a small relative retrogression; he perhaps falls back into a peculiarity of

style which he had already commenced to overcome; perhaps he feels himself impeded by a less happily chosen subject or he struggles against a less favourable mood; in short, in regard to freedom and readiness of composition, to fluency and melody of verse, he is perhaps less successful than in an earlier production, or he at least does not make the progress which was expected of him. The assumption of an unexceptional, continual progress, which as it were might be calculated by anticipation, would surely not correspond to reality, so that in our attempts at determining the date of Shakespeare's works, greater stress must surely be laid upon external indications than æsthetic critics are inclined to allow.

However unpromising the prospects of fixing the date of this play may be at present, we must not give up all hope. Many a Shakespearean problem has already been solved or been brought nearer to its solution. It is quite possible that—whether by indefatigable investigation or by some lucky chance—the chronology of the dramas may yet be satisfactorily settled. In the meantime, my dear Baron, I send you these pages with the hope that they may be to you—as they are to me—a remembrance of the genial days we have spent together. Farewell! May the Muses continue to bestow their favour upon you!

'KING HENRY VIII.'

(1874.)

The contemporaneous accounts of the burning of the Globe Theatre on the 29th of June, 1613, seem to place the date of the composition of 'King Henry VIII.' all the more beyond a doubt, as the date thus gained to all appearance entirely agrees with the characteristics of the diction and versification. The most important of these accounts are the two well-known letters of Thomas Lorkin and Sir Henry Wotton. Thomas Lorkin, on the 30th of June of that year, writes to Sir Thomas Puckering: 'No longer since than yesterday, while Bourbage and his companie were acting at the Globe the play of Henry VIII., and there shooting of certayne chambers in way of triumph, the fire catch'd it;' and Sir Henry Wotton on the 6th of July gives his nephew the following account: 'Now to let matters of state sleep, I will entertain you at the present with what happened this week at the Bankside. The King's players had a new play, called All is True, representing some principal pieces of the reign of Henry the Eighth, which was set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of pomp and majesty, even to the matting of the stage; the Knights of the order, with their Georges and Garter, the guards with their embroidered coats and the like; sufficient, in truth, within a while to

make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous. Now King Henry, making a masque at the Cardinal Wolsey's house, and certain cannons being shot off at his entry, some of the paper or other stuff wherewith one of them was stopped did light on the thatch, where being thought at first but an idle smoke, and their eyes being more attentive to the show, it kindled inwardly, and ran round like a train, consuming, within less than an hour, the whole house to the very ground. This was the fatal period to that virtuous fabric; wherein yet nothing did perish but wood and straw, and a few forsaken cloaks; only one man had his breeches set on fire, that would perhaps have broiled him, if he had not, by the benefit of a provident wit, put it out with bottle ale.'[1] That the damage done was by no means so insignificant as Sir Henry contemptuously represents it, is proved not only by B. Jonson's 'Execration upon Vulcan'[2]—Ben Jonson, according to his own words, was, like Wotton, an eye-witness—but still more circumstantially by a letter of John Chamberlaine, dated the 8th of July, in Winwood's 'Memorials,' iii. 469.[3] That no human life

[1] Letters of Sir Henry Wotton to Sir Edmund Bacon (1661), p. 30, apud Hunter, 'New Illustrations,' ii. 100; Reliqu. Wotton. (1672), p. 425.

[2] But, O those reeds! thy mere disdain of them,
Made thee beget that cruel stratagem,
Which some are pleased to style but thy mad prank,
Against the Globe, the glory of the Bank:
Which, though it were the fort of the whole parish,
Flank'd with a ditch, and forc'd out of a marish,
I saw with two poor chambers taken in,
And razed; ere thought could urge this might have been!
See the World's ruins! nothing but the piles
Left, and wit since to cover it with tiles, &c.

[3] Compare Prynne, 'Histriomastix' (1633), p. 556; Collier, 'History of English Dramatic Poetry,' iii. 298 seqq.

was lost on the occasion is indeed confirmed by Chamberlaine, as well as by Howes in his continuation of Stowe's 'Chronicle,' whose account ends with the words, 'and no man hurt.' Mr. Collier[1] thinks it possible that the play represented on this occasion may as well have been Rowley's 'When You See Me, You Know Me,' or some other unknown piece on the same subject, which has since been lost; but this doubt is evidently carried too far. The circumstance that the piece was played at the Globe by Burbage's company in itself bears testimony to its having been Shakespeare's work; besides, the details mentioned by Wotton completely agree with Shakespeare's drama, and it would be difficult to believe that any other should have resembled it so closely, least of all Rowley's play, where no cannons are introduced. The title '*All is True*,' given by Wotton, cannot mislead us, as double titles were very common, and as this second name moreover completely accords with the Prologue, in which we are repeatedly assured that there is nothing but 'chosen truth' in this play.

Supported by Wotton's explicit statement, as well as by intrinsic reasons, all German Shakespearean critics, with the exception of Schlegel and Kreyssig, now adhere to the opinion that 'Henry VIII.' was then a new play, and that it was written at the earliest in the year 1612; while the majority of English scholars fix it on an average ten years earlier. Among the latter are Johnson, Theobald, Steevens, Malone, Mr. Collier, and Mr. Halliwell, who are opposed only by

[1] History of English Dramatic Poetry, i. 386.

Knight and Hunter.[1] Knight's arguments will occupy our attention hereafter, those of Hunter may be examined at once. Hunter would likewise refer the play to the end of Elizabeth's reign did not a peculiar, and as we think, a very far-fetched consideration prevent him from so doing; he cannot believe that Shakespeare should so far have forgot the respect due to the age, sex, and royal dignity of the sovereign as to bring upon the stage the death-scene of Katherine and the coronation of Anne Boleyn, in face of Elizabeth's approaching death, when the thought of her sick bed and of the approaching coronation of her successor would have been so obvious, nay so unavoidable. Of such a violation, not only of good taste but of human feeling, Shakespeare, in his opinion, could never have been guilty. The spectators, he thinks, would have hissed down the death-scene of Katherine had it been played during Elizabeth's last illness. This is difficult to understand, for the scene is so pathetic and beautiful that, on the contrary, under the circumstances it must have excited double emotion. The eulogy on James is considered by Hunter as part of the original play; he endeavours in just as constrained and weak a manner to justify its being so strangely interwoven with the eulogy on Elizabeth, and even finds great delicacy in the circumstance that the mention of Elizabeth's death is deferred as long as possible, so long indeed that it becomes unavoidable. Independently of the fact that death always comes last, there was no reason for such

[1] Malone's Shakespeare, by Boswell, ii. 388–401; Collier's 'Shakespeare,' v. 497; Shakespeare Society's Papers, ii. 151; Knight, 'Studies of Shakespeare,' 395–404; Hunter, 'New Illustrations,' ii. 95–109.

an excessively delicate handling of the subject, if the play was not written until after Elizabeth's death. To Wotton's testimony, that the play was a new one in 1613, Hunter attaches no importance whatever, nay, he can so little resist the direct impression which the drama produces on the reader, that he finally, in spite of this testimony, as well as of his own reflections, arrives at the conviction that it was written and played four or five months after Elizabeth's death, and that Shakespeare intended to allude in it to the two most important and most popular events of the day—Elizabeth's death, which he says had some points of resemblance with Katherine's, and James' coronation festivities, the reflex of which the spectators could not but see in the coronation of Anne Boleyn. Such an artfully devised hypothesis has of course found no adherents.

A conjecture of another kind has been set forth by the advocates for the year 1612 as the only true date, both in England and in Germany, and indeed, as it seems, independently of one another. Starting from the undeniable supposition that 'Henry VIII.' was written for some festive occasion, Ulrici (already in the first edition of his work, 1839), and an anonymous writer (J. S.) in the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' 1850, vol. xxxiv., 115, seqq.[1]—who does not seem to have known Ulrici—have connected it with the marriage of the Count Palatine (Feb. 14, 1612–13), and this hypothesis has been eagerly taken up by Gervinus and Hertzberg.[2] Ger-

[1] I have of late been privately informed of the writer's name, but do not think myself at liberty to publish it.

[2] Shakespeare's Dramatische Werke übersetzt von Schlegel und Tieck, herausgegeben von der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, iv. 8 seq.

vinus thinks that the marriage of the Count Palatine induced Burbage's company to fashion Shakespeare's rudiments of this play into the present 'masque,' a form which it was scarcely the poet's intention to give to his drama. Ulrici admits no such finishing by a strange hand. 'If,' says he, 'the play were first acted at the marriage of the Count Palatine—perhaps, even composed expressly for it—it is obvious that the eulogy on Elizabeth must have sounded far more endurable to the King's ears, for the fêted princess was likewise called Elizabeth, and the eulogy might therefore be considered as a disguised encomium on her.' Hertzberg thinks it 'almost inconceivable that the German critics—(why not the English too?)—should not have taken up Ulrici's happy thought, which at once brings clearness and plausible consistency into all the data bearing upon the question.' He, however, varies Ulrici's conjecture in so far as he conceives the play to have originated in the following manner. At the marriage itself, he says, it cannot have been performed, as it is not mentioned in Lord Harrington's accounts, which, indeed, is a decisive argument against this hypothesis. But, Hertzberg goes on to say, the accounts of the young couple's progress on the Continent, as well as their triumphal entry in Heidelberg, kept up the interest which the English public took in them, and gave a welcome excuse for a theatrical after-celebration of a marriage which was so full of hope to the whole Protestant world. London could not remain behind Heidelberg in its manifestations of joy—as if London had not done its part before! Shakespeare, he continues, had indeed retired to Stratford before this time,

but came occasionally to London, and stood in continual and even personal connection with his former company. Accordingly it is 'more than probable' that he was invited to celebrate the marriage of the Count Palatine by a festive play after their departure, and that he wrote 'Henry VIII.' for this purpose. So says Hertzberg, and believes this remodelled hypothesis—to the altered form of which Ulrici has subsequently agreed (3 ed. ii. 545 seqq.)—to be the panacea for all the obscurities, difficulties, and corruptions of the play; whereas in our eyes, so many important considerations are opposed to it, that such a procedure seems altogether improbable. In the first place it seems difficult to understand how compliments which were exclusively devised for Queen Elizabeth could have been referred to the Princess Elizabeth. If she had been destined to be the future Queen of England such a thing might have been imagined: but instead of this, her marriage removed her from her native country, and the praise lavished upon Queen Elizabeth as sovereign, as well as the happiness prophesied to the kingdom under her reign, could not in the least be applied to the young Countess Palatine,—the name, in fact, being the only thing that she had in common with her father's predecessor. Ulrici himself admits that James I. was known to have had no kindly feeling towards his predecessor,[1] and that eulogies upon her must necessarily have been offensive to him. But not he alone, his daughter, too,

[1] 'King James,' says Malone, 'on his accession to the throne studiously marked his disregard for Elizabeth by the favour which he showed to Lord Southampton, and to every other person who had been disgraced by her. Of this Shakespeare could not be ignorant.'—Malone's Shakespeare, by Boswell (1821), ii. 390.

must have felt hurt by the praises poured upon the queen who had delivered her grandmother up to the executioner's axe. The want of tact and delicacy which would thus be imputed to Shakespeare is even aggravated when we consider that the repudiation of a noble, faithful, and loving wife, and an action for divorce, stand foremost among the contents of the drama. That Shakespeare should have chosen the history of a divorce for the subject of an epithalamium does not appear in any way credible. Hertzberg is angry with those critics who have thought Shakespeare capable of having called Queen Elizabeth 'an aged princess,' and of having spoken of her death during her lifetime; this, he says, would have been trampling alike upon the laws of courtesy, of good breeding, and of common-sense. Assuredly it would not have been courteous, and wanting in tact; but would not an action for divorce as epithalamium be still more reprehensible? Would not this latter hypothesis make us fall from the frying-pan into the fire? It certainly would lose part of its unseemliness and harshness if the play could be shown to have been performed only at an after-celebration; yet even at such a celebration the court must have assisted, unless the play is to dwindle down into a mere speculation upon the purse of the public. And is it to be believed that Shakespeare, in the zenith of his celebrity and at the end of his career, should have condescended to write a play for an after-celebration like this? By such a supposition the whole affair loses its point. The offensive lines, with the 'aged princess,' and the mention of her death, in our opinion stand in the closest connection with the compliment to James

the genuineness of which has been doubted by the best authorities, among others by Theobald, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Farmer, Steevens, and Ch. A. Brown; it has, in fact, been ascribed to B. Jonson. Knight, Delius, and Ulrici also direct attention to the fact that Elizabeth—had the play been written in her lifetime—must have been highly displeased with the brilliant part given to Queen Katherine, and would not have allowed the poet to represent upon the stage her own person as an infant. The first point cannot be doubted, but admits of a different explanation; the second, however, seems to be perfectly inoffensive. Surely there is neither an unpleasantness nor a fault in being born and carried to the baptismal font; it is a fact which even princes and princesses need not be ashamed of—why then should Elizabeth have taken offence at it? Even the strictest rules of etiquette do not, as far as we know, forbid us to remind a person of his or her birth or baptism. On the contrary, it seems as if the mention of Elizabeth's birth formed the principal object of the play, and that only in her lifetime it could have commanded the interest of the public. This leads to the question, not yet sufficiently answered, in how far it was permitted in Shakespeare's time to represent living or but lately deceased persons upon the stage, and this is the point from which we can best survey the arguments brought forward by Knight against assigning the play to Elizabeth's reign. Not one of these arguments is drawn from the plot, or from the choice and treatment of the subject, but only from subordinate features in the characters of the play, which as Knight believes must have excited Elizabeth's displeasure, nay, which would have

simply been impossible on the stage during her lifetime. The mention of the 'aged princess,' and of her death, is indeed passed over lightly by him, as he thinks it may possibly be a later interpolation ; but he attaches all the greater weight to Henry's habitual exclamation, 'Ha!' to which he might have added the scene where the King is introduced leaning on the Cardinal's shoulder, which is known to have been his custom, as well as that of James I. Hunter strangely enough considers this as an indication that the play was written under James, whereas it seems to point to the contrary, for such an allusion would scarcely have been agreeable to James. We may ask if, after all, it was not incumbent on the poet, to give at least a true picture of the King's person and manners, after having represented his character in so favourable a light? And would such features—so long as they were not caricatured, and Shakespeare assuredly kept them far enough from that—have had anything in them to hurt Elizabeth's feeling? Knight further takes offence at Henry's kissing Anne at the masque given at Wolsey's house, as if that was not in accordance with the general English custom, which is sufficiently known from 'Henry V.,' V. 2 ;[1] Knight is also offended at the Old Lady's pointed and loose language, and her allusions to the pension of 1000*l.* ;—but this Old Lady strongly reminds us of the Nurse in 'Romeo and Juliet,' and might indeed be permitted to use the same unnoticed liberty of speech ; she casts as little blame upon Anne's character as the Nurse upon Juliet's. Lastly, Knight cites in favour of his opinion, Suffolk's remark : 'No, his conscience has crept too near

[1] Compare Rye, 'England as seen by Foreigners,' 260 seqq.

another lady,' &c.,—but this censure is provoked by historical facts too generally known to be either suppressed or to have given offence. Knight is convinced that Elizabeth would never have tolerated such things, nay, he even starts the question, whether for such an occurrence she would not have 'taken away Burbage's licence, and sent Shakespeare to join the company of his friend Southampton in the Tower.' In his zeal he overlooks the fact that the custom of the day granted incomparably greater liberty in these things than what we are now accustomed to. Thomas Heywood, in his play, 'If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody,' printed as early as 1605–6, brought Elizabeth on the stage directly after her death, if indeed it did not happen during her lifetime; in Sir Philip Sidney's masque of 'The Lady of May,' she bore a part in person. Sometimes she and her court were reflected on in dramatic performances in 'too plaine English,' as we are told in a letter from Rowland White to Sir Robert Sidney. King James fared still worse, for soon after his accession to the English throne, the 'Tragedy of Gowry,' with all the action and actors, was represented by the King's players, 'with exceeding concourse of all sorts of people.'[1] The King, as far as we know, let the matter pass. That on Sir James Murray's petition the authors of 'Eastward Ho!' were imprisoned on account of the abusive language they had used against the Scotch, was done rather from political than personal motives, for the play contains nothing against the King's person.[2] In the only

[1] See Halpin, 'Oberon's Vision,' &c., p. 98–108.

[2] B. Jonson, in his conversations with Drummond, cast the blame upon his colleagues, Marston and Chapman. According to Gifford's account, he 'voluntarily' accompanied them to prison, an act of

case, viz. that of Chapman's 'Biron,' where a complaint was raised against the theatre for 'staging' a royal personage, it does not appear that the complaint had any result, or that any harm was done either to the actors or to the poet;[1] least of all was a hint dropped about withdrawing the licence or about the Tower. If therefore we may unhesitatingly presume that Shakespeare might have brought Henry VIII. upon the stage during Elizabeth's lifetime, the supposition will become almost a certainty if we compare the play with Rowley's 'When You See Me, You Know Me.' In this 'Chronicle-history,' the person and character of Henry VIII. are delineated with an almost appalling truthfulness; even the wording of the title (on which, moreover, the King is portrayed in full figure), shows that the poet's object was to produce a portrait as life-like in every respect as possible; the King was to be recognised as soon as seen. If Knight had compared this play, he would have found not only that the King's custom of leaning upon the shoulder of some courtier, and his characteristic exclamation, 'Ha!' but even his favourite oath, 'Mother of God!' are made use of in a very different way from what we find in Shakespeare. Perhaps he might even have made the discovery that either Shakespeare borrowed some features from Rowley's play, or that the latter was written for a rival company, and that its author purloined from Shake-

magnanimity which Gifford, of course, cannot sufficiently extol. However, all three seem to have been soon set free without further punishment. The culpable passage is given by Gifford, and looks very like a sarcasm of B. Jonson's, whatever Gifford may say to the contrary. The very fact that Jonson tried to exculpate himself at the cost of others, makes him appear the more suspicious.

[1] See p. 55.

speare.[1] A parallel like this clearly shows in what a delicate and kindly spirit Shakespeare went to work in delineating the King's character. Yet in spite of its rough handling, it can scarcely be doubted that Rowley's 'When You See Me, You Know Me,' was played in Elizabeth's reign, for its first quarto belongs to the year 1605, and, according to the well-known custom, could not have been printed until the play had been for some time on the stage. Should even this not be thought convincing, the two plays, 'The Rising of Cardinal Wolsey,' by Anthony Munday (conjointly with Drayton, Chettle, and Wentworth Smith), and 'Cardinal Wolsey,' by Henry Chettle, may be adduced, both of which, as we know from Henslowe's Diary, were performed in 1601 and 1602; it cannot be otherwise assumed than that Henry VIII. must have appeared in both plays, and only the mention of his name on the title-page seems to have been avoided. Shakespeare and his contemporaries in such things were not led by court considerations, but merely by the interests of dramatic poetry, and acted in accordance with its requirements. Shakespeare was anything but a courtier, and still less was he a flatterer of B. Jonson's stamp. It seems very conceivable that in the whole plan of his play, and in the treatment of his characters, he might have intended to do homage to his Lady Sovereign, without however taking into account those lesser points of ceremonial mentioned by Knight, nay that even in spite of the obvious intention of the play, such small traits might have given offence to court-tone;

[1] See my edition of S Rowley's 'When You See Me, You Know Me' (London, Williams and Norgate, 1874), Introduction, and p. 109.

a small mind takes offence at small things, a great one sees beyond them. Shakespeare's mind, more than any other, was directed to the Great and the Whole, and not to questions of etiquette. Besides this, in our conviction, 'Henry VIII.,' though written in Elizabeth's lifetime, was not brought upon the stage during that period; had such been the case, perhaps some such objectionable points might have been touched up, nay we do not at all feel sure but that some of them were inserted at a later revisal. We are, however, here anticipating the course of our enquiry; before proceeding further, let us turn our attention to the play itself, and endeavour to comprehend its fundamental thought, or, if such a thing should not be discoverable, at least try to catch the red thread which runs through it.

Knight has endeavoured to represent the play as one of Shakespeare's profoundest creations, and finds from indications in the prologue, that the instability of human life, the 'ever-whirling wheel,' as Spenser calls it, is the theme which the poet represents with great emphasis from its tragic point of view. He considers that Shakespeare here exerts the whole of his wonderful skill to excite our sympathy for the unfortunate characters, among whom he reckons not only Katherine and Buckingham, but half-and-half the fallen Wolsey as well. The consolation given by the poet for the perishable nature of this earthly greatness and earthly happiness, he discerns in the prophetic view of a brighter future. Knight is convinced that the play was written in the year 1612, just as it has come down to us, and that an interpolation by B. Jonson is not to

be thought of; he even concludes with the bold assertion that 'there is no play of Shakespeare which has a more decided character of unity—no one from which any passage could be less easily struck out.' With this opinion he stands very much alone; all other commentators place the play, which in various respects differs from the other histories, much less high. 'It lacks,' to use Ulrici's words, 'the inner organic form, the moral vitality, so that it is no whole, but a piece-work, *i.e.* an intellectual piece-work, and a mere apparent reality.' Kreyssig is inclined to find in it a satire upon the Tudor sovereigns; Shakespeare, he thinks, in this case places historical above poetic truth, and that the play has thereby lost its moral idea. Hertzberg shows himself as the severest critic of all; he will not allow 'Henry VIII.' to be a drama at all, but 'a spectacular historical poem, written for the celebration of some happy family event in the court of James I.' We should not feel disinclined to agree with him if only instead of the court of James he had put that of Elizabeth. Above all we miss a grand central figure in the play, controlling and connecting the whole, and embodying the historical feature of the age—a central figure like King John, Henry V., Richard II., and above all like Richard III. Instead of this, Henry VIII., Katherine, and Wolsey—not to speak of Buckingham and Cranmer—contend against one another for the first place, and we must admit that Hertzberg is not altogether wrong in rather drastically characterising the play as a 'chronicle-history with three and a half catastrophes, varied by a marriage and a coronation pageant, ending abruptly with the baptism of a child,

and in which are combined the elements of a satirical drama with a prophetic ecstasy, and all this loosely connected by the nominal hero (*sit venia verbo*) whom no poet in heaven or earth could ever have formed into a tragic character.' Into a tragic character, which in fact was not at all requisite, Henry VIII. could certainly not have been shaped, but Shakespeare might very well have made him an important historical character, at all events one of incomparably greater proportions than that which we now have before us. 'Bluff King Harry,' with his selfish energy, his unbridled sensuality, and his corresponding dose of bloodthirstiness, is by no means an undramatic character. Might not the poet have conceived him as the creator and representative of personal absolutism, who removes the last remains of feudalism, who transfers the management of state business from the aristocracy to learned officials, who completes the transition from the mediæval state into the modern, who centres the interest of the state in his own person, and who acts, even if he does not express it in words, according to the principle, *l'État*, and still more so *l'Église, c'est moi.* Was the poet in this case obliged to conclude with Elizabeth's baptism? Might not the dispute with Rome and the introduction of the Reformation, the martyrdoms of Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More, and the King's consequent deposition by the Pope, the confiscation of the ecclesiastical estates and monasteries; might not all this have been placed more conspicuously in the foreground? Did not the wars with France and Scotland, the visit of the Emperor Charles V. to London, Cromwell's execution, &c., furnish ample materials and

suggestions for a grand dramatic picture in the historical style? One deviation more or less from historical truth would not have mattered much, for in spite of the assurances of the Prologue, and the secondary title of 'All is True,' there is no lack of such deviation, even as it is. Was it necessary to attach so great a weight to scenic pageants, and to give the coronation and baptismal festivities, contrary to the poet's general custom, so prominent a position that the drama becomes a complete show-piece? Did the subject require that the arrangement of this pomp is detailed and described more carefully than in any other of Shakespeare's plays? Or did the poet merely wish to gratify the love of display in his public? But Shakespeare's public was not spoiled in this respect, and it cannot be reproached with being unduly bent upon theatrical pageants.

Taking all this into consideration, it is certainly neither in the obstinacy of the subject nor in the incapacity of the poet that we have to seek for the reasons why the play, measured by the standard of the historical drama, is inferior to the other histories, and why it wants both a grand historical substance and the unity of a strictly defined dramatic structure. If this be so, and it can scarcely be denied, we can only say that the poet did not wish it to be otherwise, nay, as will be subsequently shown, the poet himself gives an unmistakable hint on this point. If the King is nothing but a rather passive nominal hero, and stands in the background, it is only because the poet intentionally placed him there, because he had his reasons for exhibiting him only in the semi-darkness of twilight. Now such reasons did no longer exist in the reign of King James,

but only in that of Elizabeth. Had the poet written the play nine or ten years after Elizabeth's death, he would have been the more absolved from all considerations, as James did not even belong to the same dynasty as Henry; he would then no doubt have given a much truer, more animated, and thoroughly dramatic picture of the King.

That Henry's character is very leniently dealt with by the poet can only be denied by a prejudiced critic. Shakespeare, with evident intention, has not exhibited him in the full glare of light, but, as it were, only bestowed upon him a light reflected by the other personages of the play. The King is almost wholly in the hands of Wolsey, the 'o'er-great cardinal,' who is plainly represented as his evil genius. Buckingham's fall is the work of Wolsey, who has most cunningly sent the Duke's son-in-law Surrey to Ireland, so that he should be out of the way, and not be able to assist his father-in-law. Buckingham himself knows very well that he owes his fate not to the King's cruelty, but to the intrigues and jealous hatred of the Cardinal. Even in the introductory scene he designates Henry as the 'beneficial sun' whose rays Wolsey keeps from the earth; and in his parting words he admits that:—

> I had my trial
> And, must needs say, a noble one; which makes me
> A little happier than my wretched father.

He mounts the scaffold, praying for the king:—

> Commend me to his grace;
> And if he speaks of Buckingham, pray tell him,
> You met him half in heaven; my vows and prayers
> Yet are the king's; and, till my soul forsake,
> Shall cry for blessings on him: May he live

> Longer than I have time to tell his years !
> Ever belov'd, and loving, may his rule be !
> And, when old time shall lead him to his end,
> Goodness and he fill up one monument.'

Wolsey, and Katherine also, on the eve of death have the same prayers for blessings on Henry upon their lips. If these three, who surely had most reason to hate him, nay to curse him, die without resentment, reconciled to him and full of his praise, who dare be angry with him ? Must he not after all possess kindliness, noble-mindedness—'I know his noble nature,' says Wolsey—and other excellences, if even his victims cannot avoid bearing testimony to his virtues and blessing him ?

It would not be just to slight this characteristic of the King because the poet borrowed the substratum from Holinshed ; he would not have kept so closely to his source had it not suited his own plan. As little justifiable seems the objection against the King's character that he did not, like Queen Katherine, see through the untrustworthiness of the witnesses brought forward against Buckingham, and that he did not, with a truly grand and royal mind, reduce the Duke's murderous threats to their true measure, and make light of them. This neither would have suited the character of the King nor that of his time ; Henry knew the history of his ancestors too well not to know that it was dangerous to trifle with the peers ; moreover Buckingham had attacked his weakest side, by his daily-repeated prediction that the King would die childless, and that the crown would then devolve on himself. That Henry's first marriage was childless, or more

accurately that both sons died soon after their birth, and that only one daughter, Mary, survived, is well known to have been his sorest point; it was not the least important reason for his desiring the dissolution of the marriage, and the poet did not allow this motive to escape him. Under such circumstances is it not quite conceivable that in Buckingham's case the King should have allowed justice to take its own course? With Shakespeare indeed, the King takes no part in the matter except that he does not pardon the condemned man.

The same passive demeanour which the King maintains towards Buckingham he preserves in regard to the taxation and the exactions carried on by Wolsey, the odium of which is thus taken from him and cast upon other shoulders. It is certainly the Queen who, turning against the Cardinal, first implores redress, but the King, who knows nothing about the matter, or at least pretends to know nothing, directly sides with her, and gives orders for the immediate repeal of the 'terrible tribute,' in doing which he is led by the principle :—

> We must not rend our subjects from our laws,
> And stick them in our will.

Does not this clearly show the poet's intention to free Henry from the reproach of tyrannical government? Unfortunately however, the worthless Cardinal again deceives the King, and deprives him of the fruits of this truly constitutional intention by taking care that 'this revokement and pardon' are represented to the people as coming through his intercession.

The King's dependence upon the Cardinal, and the evil influence which the latter exercises over him ('for

he hath a witchcraft over the king in's tongue,' says the Lord Chamberlain), are most clearly seen in the eagerness with which the Cardinal seeks to fan the flame of the King's increasing dislike towards his Queen, and to urge the dissolution of the marriage. The Queen tells the Cardinal to his face :—

> You are mine enemy, and make my challenge,
> You shall not be my judge ; for it is you
> Have blown this coal betwixt my lord and me.

That the Cardinal protests his innocence, appeals to the King, and lets the latter confirm his non-interference, only proves that he has gone to work with sufficient cunning, so as nowhere to expose himself. The people know well enough that :—

> Either the cardinal
> Or some one about him near, have, out of malice
> To the good queen, possess'd him with a scruple
> That will undo her.

It is also known that the Cardinal by this means wishes to revenge himself on the Emperor Charles :—

> Merely to revenge him on the emperor
> For not bestowing on him, at his asking,
> The archbishopric of Toledo.

In Act II. sc. 2, the Duke of Norfolk again says that the Cardinal, since he has—

> cracked the league
> Between us and the emperor, the queen's great nephew,
> He dives into the king's soul, and there scatters
> Dangers, doubts, wringing of the conscience,
> Fears and despairs—and all these for his marriage ;
> And out of all these to restore the king
> He counsels a divorce.

The Cardinal's duplicity in regard to the divorce is dwelt on in several passages. That Wolsey urged the

divorce for his own interests is an historical fact too well known to require further discussion. His plan was to marry the King to the Duchess of Alençon, 'the French king's sister,' and thus to win the support of the latter for his own ambitious designs, which, according to his own showing, are directed to nothing less than the papal throne. That the King does not enter into the intricate plans of a political marriage, but follows his inclination like a straightforward man, by no means casts an unfavourable light upon his character. Altogether in Shakespeare he appears too honest and good-natured to see through Wolsey's intrigues; Norfolk prophesies 'The king will know him one day,' to which Suffolk replies, 'Pray God he do, he'll never know himself else.' This knowledge finally comes to the King, both through the account of the immense treasures which the Cardinal has amassed, and through his letter to the Pope, which reveals his designs and intrigues.

There can be no doubt but that in reality it was mainly the King's excessive sensuality which estranged him from his consort, who was sickly and eight years older than her husband, an incongruity which, with rare exceptions, always avenges itself. It cannot but tend morally to raise Henry's character, that the poet passes over this point in silence, and finds the motives for the divorce on the one hand in Wolsey's intrigues and plans, and on the other in the King's scruples of conscience, of which he gives an affecting account. They in truth were probably nothing but an ingenious farce, although the King, in life as well as with the poet, could not fail to be impressed by the directness with

which the Bishop of Bayonne (or Tarbes) expressed his doubts as to the legitimacy of the Princess Mary. Henry pretends to see in the early death of his two sons a divine retribution for the illegal marriage with his deceased brother's widow; and it is to be presumed that the over-zealous priests represented it to him in this light. At all events he may be pardoned if under such circumstances he should have been anxious about the succession, and felt Buckingham's taunts all the more bitterly.[1]

In regard to Henry's relation to Anne Boleyn, the poet has deviated from history, and indeed so to the advantage of both. The fête given by the Cardinal where Henry first meets her, and directly falls in love with her, is like other things taken almost word for word from Holinshed or Cavendish, except that they say nothing about the acquaintance having been formed on that occasion, a circumstance which is due to the poet's own invention. The first meeting of the lovers is speedily followed by Anne's promotion as Marchioness of Pembroke, and no less speedily by the secret marriage, before the final separation from Katherine takes place. 'The king already hath married the fair lady,' says the Lord Chamberlain, and Suffolk adds, 'Shortly, I believe, his second marriage shall be published.' Where and when this clandestine marriage took place is indeed exceedingly doubtful. Cavendish says on the 25th of January 1532–3, but that has nothing to do with our play, and the fact itself cannot be doubted.

1 For an exhaustive elucidation of this intricate subject in all its bearings, the reader may be referred to Mr. Froude's 'History of England' (1856), i. 95 seqq.

After all, it is the solemn coronation which raises Anne to the position of a true and lawful queen, and which brilliantly effaced any imperfections and blemishes that might have attached to her; it is the zenith of her life. The poet therefore advisedly displays before our eyes the royal pomp, the central figure of which is Elizabeth's mother. The highest members of the aristocracy vie with one another in doing homage to the young Queen, and in serving her; they lay 'claim' to their offices at the coronation (IV. 1.)[1] Happy he who is allowed to approach the new occupant of the throne, and the joy of the people has never before been so great; 'they praise the scruple' which induced the King to part with Katherine. Surrey, Buckingham's son-in-law, who has hoped that the secret marriage with Anne might be true, now that he is assured of the fact, enthusiastically exclaims, 'Now, all my joy trace the conjunction!' Anne is said to have the 'sweetest face,' to be 'the goodliest woman,' 'an angel,' and 'a gallant creature, complete in mind and feature,' as Suffolk says, Act III. sc. 2. But it is not only Anne's exterior on which such praise is bestowed, the poet has also taken care to represent her in no less a degree worthy of her high position and beauty. In Shakespeare she undertakes nothing against Katherine, her former mistress, nor does she think of occupying her place, which can scarcely be historically true, for from

[1] Hall, in describing the marriage-feast, relates 'that on the right side of the queen's chayre stode the Countesse of Oxforde, wydowe, and on the left side stood the Countesse of Worcester, all the dyner season, which diuers tymes in the dyner tyme did hold a fyne cloth before the queene's face, when she lyst to spet, or do otherwyse at her pleasure, and that at the queene's feete, under the table, satte two gentlewomen all dyner tyme.'

Cavendish we know that in two letters to the Cardinal, who was cunning enough to alter his sentiments in her favour, she thanks him for the trouble he has taken concerning the divorce. In Shakespeare, on the contrary, she entertains sincere respect for Katherine, and pities her. 'Not for all the riches under heaven' would she become queen, but rather be—

> Lowly born
> And range with humble cottagers content . . .
> Than to be perk'd up in a glistening grief
> And wear a golden sorrow.

She has a tender conscience, the Old Lady in waiting sneeringly calls it a 'cheveril' one, and like Juliet's nurse recommends her to 'stretch' it. She accepts her appointment as Marchioness of Pembroke full of innocence and humility, so that the Chamberlain who brings her the message is charmed by her 'soft mind,' her 'many virtues,' and the 'beauty and honour which in her are so mingled.' She is, as the Old Lady says, not only adorned with the charms of woman, but with a woman's heart. In a word, all who speak of her, high as well as low, those around her and those strangers to her, express themselves in the same eulogistic terms; even her enemy the Cardinal cannot help acting as herald of her virtues. After having just maintained that he will have no Ann Bullen for the King, he continues :—

> What though I know her virtuous,
> And well deserving? yet I know her for
> A spleeny Lutheran; and not wholesome to
> Our cause, that she should lie i' the bosom of
> Our hard-rul'd king.

Besides this he has no objection against her except her

inferior rank—he the butcher's son!—he disrespectfully calls her—

> The late queen's gentlewoman; a knight's daughter.

This latter blemish, however, has been obliterated by the King, and the charge of heresy was in Elizabeth's eyes rather a matter of praise. Even the credit of having aided in Wolsey's overthrow, and of having thus rid the King and country of their evil genius, is ascribed to Anne Boleyn. We hear from Wolsey himself that Lady Anne was the weight that pulled him down, and that he lost all his glories through that one woman. In so far Wolsey's fall forms a necessary part of the dramatic structure, and could not be omitted. In him and in Katherine we see the downfall of Catholicism, in Cranmer and Anne Boleyn the approaching dawn of Protestantism.

Cranmer is likewise placed in a very advantageous light. In order to show how he is persecuted and almost condemned as the champion of Protestantism, the poet has antedated his trial by ten years. It is only the personal friendship and the direct interference of the King that saves him from the Tower. He is, as Norfolk says, 'a worthy fellow, and hath ta'en much pain in the king's business.' His last and highest distinction however is, that together with the Duchess of Norfolk and the Marchioness of Dorset, he is made one of Elizabeth's sponsors. This sponsorship is the climax of his part in the play, and shows how he too serves to throw a favourable reflex both upon his royal patron and upon Elizabeth.

The poet repeatedly insists on the circumstance

that Anne's public wedding and coronation was preceded by Henry's divorce from Katherine in the best and most legitimate form. The Canonical Divorce Court in Black-Friars is by no means merely introduced for the display of pageantry, or because the poet found it in Holinshed, but in order to impress the divorce upon us in the most striking manner, and at the same time to characterise the mutual relation between the husband and wife. According to the poet the divorce is not urged by the King, but rather forced upon him in the name of the Church by the two Cardinals; Henry even bestows an affectionate praise upon his queen :—

> Go thy ways, Kate :
> That man i' the world who shall report he has
> A better wife, let him in nought be trusted,
> For speaking false in that : Thou art, alone
> (If thy rare qualities, sweet gentleness,
> Thy meekness saint-like, wife-like government,—
> Obeying in commanding,—and thy parts
> Sovereign and pious else, could speak thee out),
> The queen of earthly queens.

He desires the court to give her the most scrupulous justice, nay he even dares to assert that if the court could prove the validity of the marriage, by his life and kingly dignity he would be content—

> To wear our mortal state to come with her,
> Katherine our queen, before the primest creature
> That's paragon'd o' the world.

The poet has taken all this from his chronicle, but he uses and arranges his materials so as to represent Henry in the most favourable light. Katherine, on the other hand, in full consciousness of her right and her royal descent and dignity, does not altogether act wisely by not submitting to the court, and by quitting

it and not reappearing at the subsequent sittings, in spite of the repeated summons. She convulsively clings to her rank as queen, her majesty and splendour, to part with which, in Anne's words, is a 'sufferance panging as soul and body's severing.' Even in the death-scene, Katherine becomes enraged at a servant, who in his haste forgets to bend his knee to her, and will never see him again. This demeanour not only sets the two Cardinals against her, but it also completely estranges the King, a result of which she is forewarned by both Wolsey and Campejus. A certain weight is thus placed in the scales against Katherine and in favour of Henry. The divorce and invalidity of the marriage are at last proclaimed, 'for the non-appearance, and the king's late scruples,' by the Spiritual Court at Dunstable, presided over by Cranmer; and 'all famous colleges almost, in Christendom,' as we are informed by Sussex, have pronounced the same judgment, before the King's marriage with Anne is publicly proclaimed. Thus the poet has carefully removed all doubts which might be raised against the validity of the second marriage; but as if even this were not yet sufficient to do away with every scruple, Katherine is made to die before Elizabeth's birth, so that the legitimacy of the latter becomes indisputable. Elizabeth, as is well known, was born in 1533, whereas Katherine's death did not take place till 1536. Are we to believe that the poet indulged in such a flagrant anachronism merely for the purpose of introducing the affecting death-scene of Katherine? This would be undervaluing his poetic character, power, and motives. Schlegel strangely enough sees in Katherine's death the

real end of the play, and believes this to have been the reason why the poet fixed it at an earlier date, against the order of time. To this view we can in no way subscribe. The true import of the anachronism becomes apparent when we recollect that the legitimacy of Elizabeth's birth was open to much stronger doubts than that of her sister Mary. In the opinion of the Catholic Church, Henry's marriage with Anne Boleyn was not only invalid because his marriage with Katherine had not been dissolved by the Pope, but also because Anne was said to have been precontracted, which was considered a legal impediment. A third doubt as to the validity of the marriage lay in the fact of the King's having previously kept up an illicit intercourse with Anne's elder sister, Mary Boleyn. In addition to this, Anne's marriage with the King was, before her execution, solemnly declared null and void at Lambeth by Archbishop Cranmer, and thus the illegitimacy of Elizabeth's birth was publicly proclaimed by order of her own father.[1] Cardinal Allen[2] therefore, in his 'Admonition to the Nobility and People of England,' in the year of the Armada, 1588, might unhesitatingly summon the English people to rise in rebellion against the illegitimate daughter of a disreputable person, who, he says, was most justly executed for her crimes. Surely this declaration of illegitimacy must have remained a dark spot and a

[1] Froude (1856), i. 497 and 500.

[2] Cardinal Allen's 'Admonition to the Nobility and People of England and Ireland,' &c., A.D. 1588. Reprinted, with a preface by Eupator, London, 1842. The original is extremely rare, as both Protestants and Catholics are said to have vied with each other in destroying it; the latter because it betrayed their secret thoughts and plans.

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bitter mortification to Elizabeth throughout her life. Can it be doubted that under the circumstances it would have been an extremely welcome and pleasing mark of respect to her when the greatest poet of her time made her father's reign the subject of an historical drama, in which not only this father but her mother too were exhibited in the most advantageous light possible, and her own birth was represented as completely legitimate, nay, as the most joyous and most important event of her father's reign? Not represented in the servile manner of a B. Jonson, but with that free and grand historical conception which Shakespeare does not forsake even where he condescends to compliment his sovereign or some other individual! Represented, as if that which is the main object of the drama resulted spontaneously from its subject, and as if the poet had done no more than, without art or design, bring the historical events on the stage under the title of 'All is True.' Elizabeth was certainly accustomed to gross and exaggerated flattery, but her high intelligence and her womanly feeling could not possibly have remained insensible to this superior kind of homage. Must it not have been a final satisfaction to the 'aged princess' to indulge in the hope that the history of her parents and of her birth would thus kindly be established in public opinion? Was there a more pleasing form in which she could have wished to see the life, characters, and the marriage of her parents remembered in after times? Taking everything into consideration, it seems to allow of no doubt that the play, with its apology for Henry, its glorification of Anne Boleyn, and its apotheosis of Elizabeth, was not only written in the reign of

Elizabeth, but written expressly for her, to commemorate some festive occasion towards the end of her reign. Such a homage may have been suggested to the poet from various quarters; we know that Chettle exhorted him to write a dirge in praise of the deceased Queen, and what happened in this respect after her death, will probably not have been wanting in her lifetime.

Now what was this festive occasion? It seems most natural to think of the day of Elizabeth's birth or baptism, in which case Henry's joy in the birth of the child would have appeared in its fullest light; a joy which in reality did by no means answer the poet's lively description, for the King's ardent desire was to have a son. This deviation from history also, is a hint for the right understanding of the play; in fact all the poet's deviations from historical truth point to the same goal. The enthusiastic prophecy with which, like a brilliant piece of firework, Cranmer closes the drama, would on no other day have sounded more splendid, and have transported the audience to greater joy, than on the birthday of the aged Queen, when she herself and her people would look back with a feeling of universal pride and happiness upon her glorious reign, and when all the dangers and inconveniences which had arisen for them from her father's numerous marriages were happily removed. The play would then have appeared as a last reconciliation of feelings, and, as it were, a mellow evening halo of her life. That Cranmer's prophecy is not merely an accidental appendage is clear from the whole structure of the play; it has been interwoven in it from the beginning, and is introduced by previous hints. The Chamberlain, who

informs Anne of her promotion in rank, cannot refrain from expressing the presentiment :—

> But from this lady may proceed a gem
> To lighten all this isle,

and the Duke of Suffolk is convinced that she will bring many a blessing to the land 'which shall in it be memorized.'

And yet we feel convinced that the play was not intended to celebrate the Queen's birthday, but some other festival. For if indeed it had been performed on Elizabeth's last birthday, what would then become of Wotton's statement that in 1613 it was a new play? We should have to take refuge in the makeshift introduced by Drake, which we shall presently consider. The eulogy upon James might be a later addition, but what then about the death-scene of Katherine, and the undeniable fact that her character is placed so prominently in the foreground, and delineated so lovingly, that it surpasses the other characters of the play in moral and tragic grandeur, and claims the especial sympathy of the spectator and reader? This is so obvious that Dr. Johnson could condense his judgment in the words: 'The genius of Shakespeare comes in and goes out with Katherine. Every other part may be easily conceived and easily written.' We here meet with an intrinsic contradiction, an almost inconceivable discord, such as is found in no other of the poet's plays. For we consider it to be impossible that this glorification of Katherine can be blended into an internal unity with that bestowed on Anne Boleyn and her newly born daughter. Shakespeare cannot have aimed at giving a representation of both sides of the picture at one and

the same time. Even those critics who recognise Katherine as the inner moral or dramatic centre of the play, must feel as great an objection to this contradiction as we do, for they are after all unable to deny the whitewashing of Anne's character, and the consequent apotheosis of Elizabeth. Schlegel entangles himself in a strange inconsistency when, notwithstanding his firm conviction that the play was written and performed during Elizabeth's lifetime, he nevertheless looks upon Katherine as the real heroine of the piece; 'she excites,' he says, 'the most intense sympathy by her virtue, her defenceless misfortune, her soft but firm opposition, and her noble resignation.' And this he supposes to have pleased Elizabeth, and to have been acted 'before her eyes.' At any rate, neither spectators nor readers can be won at the same time for Katherine and Anne Boleyn. From whatever point of view we may regard the play, we find in it an evident discord which, in our opinion, can only be explained in one way, and that is the following.

On the 12th of April, 1603, exactly seventy years had elapsed since Anne Boleyn's public nuptials, and this was the day for which the play, written in the winter of 1602–3, was destined. It might indeed have been repeated no less appropriately on Anne's seventieth coronation day (1st of June of the same year), and on Elizabeth's seventieth birthday (7th of September), days which might as well be celebrated by theatrical entertainments as the anniversary of the Queen's accession, in honour of which in 1595 a masque was represented at Essex House.[1] Unfortunately however

[1] Halpin, 'Oberon's Vision,' p. 101 seq.

Elizabeth was no longer alive on these days, but died on the 24th of March. The play had thus lost its object, and was laid aside. Perhaps it was now to be published, so as not to have been written altogether in vain; at least, according to Steevens, in 1604 a play, under the title of 'Henry VIII.,' was entered on the Stationers' Register by the well-known publisher Nathaniel Butter. It is indeed there called an 'Enterlude,' and it may justly be asked whether this designation allows us to think of Shakespeare's play. Mr. Collier says yes, Ulrici no. It is highly probable that this entry refers to Samuel Rowley's 'When You See Me, You Know Me,' which was really published by Butter in the year 1605, and although it bears the name of a Chronicle-history on the title-page, yet much more readily admits of being styled an 'Enterlude' than Shakespeare's work.[1] A second edition of this play appeared in 1613, and thus reminded the company of the Globe Theatre of the Shakespearean drama in their possession, which they now resolved to bring upon the stage. That for this purpose it had to undergo a remodelling is obvious. First of all the prophetic eulogy on Elizabeth had to lose its point by being transferred to James. This was, so to say, the lightning conductor to intercept James' displeasure, which the play would otherwise have incurred, the actors perhaps not excepted. The great majority of English and German critics are now unanimous in considering this second part of the prophecy as an incongruous,

[1] See my edition of S. Rowley's play, p. iv seq. It is, however, possible that the entry may have referred to a play by Robert Greene, now lost, which, according to Stowe, treated of the same subject.

awkwardly inserted interpolation, and nothing seems more plausible than that the allusion to the age and death of Elizabeth was likewise inserted at the same time. For how could the poet or adapter have made the transition to James without first causing Elizabeth to die? But the adapter was not content with extending the prophetic eulogy to James, he felt very well that the actual object of the play must be somewhat disguised. This he did by giving greater proportions and a tragic turn to Katherine's character, whereas it no doubt previously stood in perfect accordance with the other characters, as also with the whole tendency of the play, as we have interpreted it. It was only now that Katherine became a martyr. The scene between her and the two Cardinals is so loosely connected with the plot, and can so easily be dispensed with, that it may unhesitatingly be regarded as a subsequent interpolation. The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the death-scene of Katherine, although its substance cannot be cut out from the play as completely as that of the scene just mentioned. For that Katherine's death must have been mentioned in the original form of the play seems unquestionable from what has been said above.

A confirmation of this interpretation, and one which has as yet not been noticed, seems to be discoverable in the epilogue, no matter by whom it may have been composed. Here we read the remarkable lines :—

> I fear
> All the expected good we're like to hear
> For this play at this time, is only in
> The merciful construction of good women;
> For such a one we show'd 'em.

What is the meaning of 'at this time?' Can it be otherwise interpreted than thus: 'At the representation of this play, written ten years ago, and now remodelled, we hope principally to obtain the approbation of good women, for such a one we have now introduced to them in the person of Katherine;—had the play been represented at the time of its composition, we should have reaped a different praise for it.' That women must sympathise most with the part of Katherine is obvious, and in spite of the advantageous light in which the poet has placed Anne Boleyn, yet the melancholy fate of the former, and the dignity with which she bears it, ensure for her the undisputed preference among women. The prologue admits this with a distinctness which leaves nothing to be desired:—

> Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow,
> We now present. Those that can pity, here
> May, if they think it well, let fall a tear;
> The subject will deserve it.

Further:—

> Be sad, as we would make ye.

And in conclusion:—

> And, if you can be merry then, I'll say
> A man may weep upon his wedding day.

This latter expression once more calls to mind the hypothesis that 'Henry VIII.' was composed for the nuptials of the Count Palatine, which for this reason alone ought to have been excluded: could Shakespeare or any one else have wished to draw tears from the eyes of the audience, if the play was intended for the celebration of such a joyful event? The contradiction is evident. At the same time the lines quoted seem to

prove that the author of the prologue and the reviser of Katherine's part were one and the same person.

It is probable that the second title, 'All is True,' was likewise added when the play was remodelled, either the better to appease the King, who after all could not object to historical truth, or in order to give the play a new appearance. Malone has pointed to the fact that for this very reason, just about the year 1612–13, various plays of Shakespeare were furnished with new titles.[1] This point, however, is not of much consequence. It is of more importance that Wotton's statement, that 'All is True' was a new play in the year 1613, should thus obtain its due, and that we should not be obliged either summarily to reject it, as Hunter does, or to remove it by an artificial interpretation, like Drake. The latter wishes us to believe that Wotton wrote very carelessly, and by the expression *new*, only meant to say that it was a *revived* play. If, he adds, this were not the case, Thomas Lorkin, in his letter, could not have said 'the play of Henry VIII.' as if it were a well-known piece, but must necessarily have called it 'a play, or a new play, called Henry VIII.' Now it may be granted that Wotton did not trouble himself much about theatrical affairs, and that—as is proved by his sarcastic tone—he did not attach any great importance to them; however, such direct testimony can only be weakened by most convincing arguments, and we think that our conjecture satisfactorily explains the contradiction which may exist between the language of Wotton and that of Lorkin; the former has as much right to call the play a new one, *i.e.*, one

[1] Malone's Shakespeare, by Boswell (1821), ii. 396.

not yet acted, as the latter to treat it as one that was well known.

Thus, in regard to date, we cannot but agree with those commentators who refer the play to the end of Elizabeth's reign, and the impression on the unprejudiced reader or spectator, who has not been perplexed by critical investigations, will no doubt be the same. From the above remarks it is clear that in the very first years of the 17th century, Henry VIII. and his great Cardinal were favourite themes, and were treated simultaneously by different dramatic poets. Mr. Collier's conjecture therefore, that the play was probably first performed at the coronation of Queen Anne on July 24, 1603, needs no refutation, as nothing but the identity of the name of the two queens, Anne Boleyn and Anne of Denmark, can be alleged in its favour.

There remains but one argument which, by English, and still more so by German critics, has been adduced against the year 1602–3 as the date of the play, and in favour of 1612–13. Both diction and versification seem to prove that 'Henry VIII.' is one of Shakespeare's latest productions, as has been most ingeniously demonstrated by Hertzberg.[1] Knight[2] and others, who formerly referred to these peculiarities of style and metre, did not go so far as to draw from them systematic inferences on the chronological order of Shakespeare's dramas, as Hertzberg does, whose chief standard is the percentage of double endings. This percentage, according to him, is highest in 'Henry VIII.,'

[1] 'Shakespeare's Dramatische Werke übersetzt von Schlegel und Tieck. Herausgegeben von der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft,' iv. 5 and 22; viii. 288; xi. 347; xii. 292.

[2] Studies of Shakespeare, 403 seqq.

namely 37 per cent.; or, as he says in another passage, 44 per cent. 'Troilus and Cressida' has 20½, 'Othello' 28, 'Cymbeline' 30 (or 32) per cent. 'Timon of Athens' is unfortunately not yet included in his calculations. Hertzberg himself however is far from 'claiming the certainty of a mathematical law' for this percentage list, and even if it were to be acknowledged as an absolute chronological standard, yet it would be necessary to investigate the especial presuppositions under which it could be applied to this or any other play. Who can say in how far the remodelling of the play in 1612 may have influenced the versification, especially the percentage of double endings? Shakespeare's versification in general, and his use of double endings in particular, which doubtless increased in number as he advanced in years, still require continued investigation; a general statement of the percentage for a play *en bloc* is not sufficient. This has been shown by the anonymous writer in the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' previously mentioned, who has there examined 'Henry VIII.' act by act and scene by scene from this point of view, and has come to the conclusion that the double endings occur most frequently in those very scenes which are suspicious for other reasons, namely in Katherine's conversation with the two Cardinals, and in the death-scene. In the former, in 166 lines there are 119 double endings; the proportion therefore is 1 to 1·3. The death-scene (according to earlier editions?), has been divided into two scenes by the writer, the first of which (IV. 2), extends to the vision, and in eighty lines contains fifty-one double endings, hence 1 to 1·5; the second (IV. 3), from thence to the conclusion of the act,

contains ninety-three lines, also with fifty-one double endings, that is, 1 to 1·8. In order to show the difference it may be mentioned that in Act V. sc. 1, the proportion is 1 to 2·5; in Act II. sc. 4, 1 to 3·1, and in Act I. sc. 1, it even sinks to 1 to 3·5. As this difference can in no way be explained by the contents of the respective scenes, the anonymous writer surmises that the doubtful scenes may have been penned by Fletcher, who is particularly fond of double endings. The fourth act of Fletcher's 'Thierry and Theodoret' (published in 1621, but evidently written at an earlier date), for instance, contains in 232 lines 154 that are double endings, *i.e.* 2 to 3. A careful comparison of the 'Two Noble Kinsmen,' the writer thinks, would be most interesting and instructive in regard to this point.[1] But the writer not only recognises two different hands in the play, he is even inclined to believe in a third. The opinion set forth by various English and German commentators, that a second hand has been at work on the play, is indeed entitled to the most careful consideration. In Mr. Thornbury[2] it certainly does appear in too apodictic and awkward a form, when he says, 'Henry VIII.—whoever wrote it, for it cannot be all Shakespeare's—is marred by a tedious eulogy, both of James and Elizabeth,' &c.,—as if the two eulogies stood in the same predicament, and as if that on Elizabeth, upon which the whole structure of the play is based, were an appendage by a different hand. Schlegel also expresses himself with an unjustifiable positiveness. 'It

[1] This was written and printed several months before the ingenious papers of the Rev. F. G. Fleay were published in the 'Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society.'

[2] 'Shakespeare's England,' ii. 62.

is known' (?), says he, 'that B. Jonson, in the reign of King James, brought the play upon the stage with increased pomp, and took the liberty of making some alterations and additions. Without doubt (?) the prophecy on James is Jonson's; it could only have displeased Elizabeth, and is so badly inserted that it is recognised at once as a foreign interpolation.'[1] Among English critics, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Farmer, Steevens, Ch. A. Brown, and others, have expressed the same conviction. Mr. Brown also finds that the display of theatrical pomp is suspiciously indicative of B. Jonson, and it is very possible that the latter (in agreement with the poet?) was the remodeller, and that in accordance with his love of masques he still increased the splendid pageantry already prescribed. Both the prologue and epilogue, as Dr. Johnson has remarked, are quite in B. Jonson's manner; if they stood in his works nobody would think of ascribing them to Shakespeare; both were certainly added in 1612–13. The death-scene of Katherine, which we have shown must in all likelihood be ascribed to the author of the prologue, would do B. Jonson the highest credit, even if he should have been favoured with oral instructions from the poet respecting it; perhaps it is due to Fletcher, who was better able to enter upon a foreign intention and diction than B. Jonson, so that indeed three hands were at work on the play. At all events the scene is carried out completely in the spirit of Shakespeare.

In conclusion we cannot avoid touching once more on the circumstance that we indeed possess no kind of trustworthy information as to when Shakespeare may

[1] 'Vorlesungen,' ii. 2, 226.

have ended his poetical career, but that from several reasons it appears as if in the general opinion much too long a duration were assigned to it. If Shakespeare's regular production ceased as early as 1604, as we have endeavoured to prove in the essays on 'The Tempest,' and on the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream,' then 'Henry VIII.,' in spite of this alteration of the chronological arrangement, must be reckoned as one of his latest plays, and its loose versification would then in no way cause a difficulty. That the 'Tempest,' although as we apprehend written somewhat later than 'Henry VIII.,' nevertheless enjoys a more regular versification and a smaller percentage of double endings is explained partly by the fact that a considerable portion of the double endings in 'Henry VIII.' were introduced at the remodelling, partly by the fact that in the 'Tempest' the poet intentionally returned to a greater strictness or self-restraint in regard to composition, as well as in regard to style.

'HAMLET' IN FRANCE.

(1865.)

It is generally supposed that Voltaire first introduced Shakespeare into France, at least he has boasted loudly enough that this immortal service—to his countrymen or to Shakespeare?—is due to him. If, however, Monsieur de Voltaire be cross-examined, as has been done in Germany, particularly in Al. Schmidt's excellent treatise,[1] the popular proverb, 'Much cry and little wool,' will be found applicable to his case. Long before Voltaire's time we meet in France with various traces pointing to Shakespeare, and they might probably be multiplied by a careful searching of the Imperial Library at Paris. It may suffice to mention Cyrano de Bergerac's tragedy of 'Agrippina,' in which reflections and even turns of language from 'Cymbeline,' 'The Merchant of Venice,' and 'Hamlet' are to be found.[2]

This much in the meantime is correct, that it is only since Voltaire, and for the most part through him, that the general attention of the French literary world has

[1] Al. Schmidt, Voltaire's Verdienst um die Einführung Shakespeare's in Frankreich, Königsberg, 1864.

[2] According to Lacroix, Histoire de l'Influence de Shakespeare sur le Theâtre Français, 346, Rathery in the Revue Contemporaine, and Baron in the Athenaeum Français (1855), have proved this in detail. Shakespeare seems to have been known and perhaps even acted at Paris, as early as 1604. See The Athenaeum, 1865, I. 96. Notes and Queries, 1865, No. 174, p. 335.

been directed to England, and that since then the French drama, which during the 17th century had borrowed its materials and suggestions from the Spanish, commenced to turn its attention to Shakespeare. Since that time there has arisen an intellectual struggle for conquest, in which the English have gradually acquired larger possessions in the domain of the French mind than they once actually possessed in the 'fair land of France.' What they have once been forced to surrender to the Maid of Orleans, Shakespeare has reconquered for them in a higher sphere.

It is a curious fact that in this struggle 'Hamlet,' the very play the subject of which came to England from, or at least through France, is always found in the vanguard. Whenever Shakespeare is spoken of, he is styled the author of 'Hamlet,' 'Hamlet' being to a certain extent regarded as the embodiment not only of Shakespeare, but of the English drama in general.

Whenever, in France, we meet with an investigation on the nature of Shakespeare's poetry, a criticism of its beauties or of its barbarous irregularities, it is always 'Hamlet' from which the discussion proceeds, or to which it leads in the end. 'Hamlet' has been, so to speak, the pioneer destined to break the ground for English taste in France, as well as elsewhere. The same, it is well known, was the case in Germany.[1] Doubtless this historical part which Hamlet has had to play is by no means accidental. 'Hamlet,' more than

[1] 'Hamlet' is also the first of Shakespeare's plays which has been translated into Welsh. See 'Hamlet, Tywysog Denmarc. Gan W. Shakespeare.' Wrexham, 1865.

any other play, reveals the specific Germanic mind, which sets itself the task of solving the deepest problems of all existence. In no other of Shakespeare's plays do we see such a struggle to get at an understanding of the world and life, and for this very reason it lays hold of all minds with a mysterious force which charms them within its own magic circle. In English poetry in general, and especially in Shakespeare, characterisation is the principal object, whereas in the French classic drama abstract generality predominates over concrete individuality. In no one of all Shakespeare's plays is this individuality so emphatically brought forward as in 'Hamlet,' where the whole tragic conflict centres in it. In this respect 'Hamlet' forms the culminating point of Shakespeare's poetry, and the most prominent representative of that Germanic element which is penetrating into France. Thus 'Hamlet' appears as the sharpest contrast to the classic drama of the French. In the latter, discreet moderation was considered as a fundamental law, whereas 'Hamlet,' resisting every classification, exercised the attractive power of the Inscrutable and the Incommensurable; in substance as well as in form it was incomprehensible, and opposed to the French mind as one pole to the other. Instead of action, which since Aristotle has been considered the substance of every legitimate drama, non-action was here made the substance of tragedy. In regard to form 'Hamlet' was the very play that gave the greatest offence to the classic taste of the French, although from the very first they could not be insensible to some of its striking and overpowering beauties.

Nowhere were the sacred rules so trampled upon as here; nowhere were the three unities violated in so revolting a manner; nowhere did the subordinate personages taken from among the people—who on the French stage were scarcely permitted to appear as dummies—play such important and talkative parts as here; and nowhere were courtly manners more thoughtlessly disregarded. Nay, the French feeling of propriety is not even yet quite reconciled with the notorious *fossoyeurs*, great as is the change which has since taken place in the literary taste and criticism of the French.[1] In a word, the prevailing influence of 'Hamlet' in France seems to us to rest principally upon the mysterious charm of contrast, as well as upon the charm of the non-comprehended and the apparently Incomprehensible. It is said of the rattlesnake that it fascinates with its glance the birds which it has selected for its prey; in much the same manner 'Hamlet' has fascinated the most eminent minds of the French nation, till, step by step, it has penetrated into wider and wider circles, and won them for itself.

At the time when Voltaire wielded the sceptre of the French Parnassus, the classical literature of the French resembled a garden laid out with hedges of yew, flower parterres, statues, and basins, according to the strictest rules of Lenôtre.[2] It was Voltaire who brought into the garden a pailful of the waters of

[1] Lacroix, Histoire de l'Influence de Shakespeare, 342.

[2] Some years after the above was written, I found the same comparison between the classic poetry of the French and the gardens laid out by Lenôtre, in Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Art and Poetry (Works, ed. by Boecking, vi. 61), which I had not consulted for the space of nine years (1874).

English, especially of Shakespeare's poetry, which were rushing past outside in the wilderness. He did this partially as a warning to his countrymen, to show them how wild and muddy this water was. Hamlet was uppermost in the pail. The wild water—without Voltaire either knowing or wishing it—began to bubble as if by some magic power; it burst the pail, overflowed the marble basin, gradually formed a separate bed for itself, and refreshed the lawn and flower beds in an almost marvellous manner. Shrubs, hedges, and avenues began to sprout and shoot forth so exuberantly that the scissors could no longer keep them in trim; enough, the wild water will not come to rest till it has transformed the stiff French garden into a natural and luxuriant English park.

The influence which Shakespeare and English literature in general exercised upon Voltaire, and the position which he assumed in relation to them, may be left undiscussed as not belonging to our subject. That he repeatedly occupied himself intently with Hamlet—more intently than with any other work of Shakespeare—is well known. His translations of some select scenes and passages, his imitation of the Ghost (first in 'Eriphyle'[1] and afterwards in 'Semiramis'), and lastly his criticism of the play, have been elsewhere sufficiently discussed, so that we may pass them over. But his translation of the celebrated monologue, 'To be or not to be,' must be reproduced, partly because Voltaire fancies that he has therein shown 'how poets ought to be translated,'

[1] The murder of Polonius, instead of the King, behind the scenes, is likewise imitated in 'Eriphyle,' or, as the French write it, 'Eryphile.'

partly in order to serve for a comparison with later translations.

Demeure, il faut choisir, et passer à l'instant
De la vie à la mort, et de l'être au néant.
Dieux justes, s'il en est, éclairez mon courage.
Faut-il vieillir courbé sous la main qui m'outrage,
Supporter ou finir mon malheur et mon sort?
Qui suis-je? qui m'arrête? et qu'est ce que la mort?
C'est la fin de nos maux, c'est mon unique asile;
Après de longs transports, c'est un sommeil tranquille.
On s'endort, et tout meurt. Mais un affreux réveil
Doit succéder peut-être aux douceurs du sommeil.
On nous menace; on dit que cette courte vie
De tourmens éternels est aussitôt suivie.
O mort! moment fatal! affreuse éternité,
Tout cœur à ton seul nom se glace epouvanté.
Eh! qui pourrait sans toi supporter cette vie?
De nos fourbes puissans bénir l'hypocrisie?
D'une indigne maîtresse encenser les erreurs?
Ramper sous un ministre, adorer ses hauteurs?
Et montrer les langueurs de son âme abattue
À des amis ingrats, qui détournent la vue?
La mort serait trop douce en ces extrémités.
Mais le scrupule parle, et nous crie, Arrêtez.
Il défend à nos mains cet heureux homicide,
Et d'un héros guerrier fait un chrétien timide.

'After this piece of poetry,' Voltaire continues, 'the reader is requested to look at the literal translation,' which he then gives. He fancies that it is he who has first raised the monologue into real poetry. He neither could nor cared to arrive at a real understanding of the play, which to him is but 'the dream of a drunken savage with a few flashes of beautiful thoughts,' in the same way as he considers Shakespeare in general to be but a barbarous mixture of childish stupidities and sublime thoughts, of coarseness and grandeur, of rudeness and power. He is a 'huge dunghill' upon which Voltaire has found some pearls, a 'barbarous juggler,' a '*vilain singe*.' 'Shakespeare,' says V. Hugo, 'gave

Voltaire an opportunity of showing his cleverness in shooting. He rarely misses the mark' (we think on the contrary always) ; 'he shot at Shakespeare as peasants shoot at geese.' But peasants are no great shots either. The Academy, to which Voltaire addressed his analysis of 'Hamlet,' raised no opposition, and from its silence we may fairly conclude that in the main it shared his views. How indeed would it have been possible for a literature in its zenith suddenly to bow before a foreigner, to acknowledge the superiority of a foreign poem, and thus to admit its own failings? Villemain is convinced that French poetry would have taken a different course if the great Corneille had formed his ideas from English instead of Spanish poetry. But such a supposition belongs to the region of empty possibilities. It was neither accident nor caprice that led Corneille to Spanish poetry, but the tendency of public and literary life in his own country, which at that time occupied a position of complete repugnance, or at least indifference, to English poetry. The acquaintance with England introduced by Voltaire could not possibly bear immediate fruits; the wonder rather is, not that it was so slow in working, but that it led to such rapid results.

The way in which Voltaire wished to see Shakespeare made valuable to French poetry was that 'the pearls found upon the dunghill' were without any great scruples to be taken and set artistically, by which process they were to receive a more beautiful existence in the domain of true poetry than they could enjoy on the dunghill. This work of poetical adaptation, begun by Voltaire himself, was carried to its climax by the

Academician, Jean François Ducis (1733–1816), who between the years 1769–1792 remodelled six of Shakespeare's tragedies. The series opens with the adaptation of Hamlet (1769), which excited great interest not only in France but in other countries also; it was translated into Italian (1774), and into Dutch (1778).

Let us first look at the contents of this Academic remodelling. Old Hamlet has been murdered. The Queen has placed a cup of poison, prepared by Claudius, beside his bed, and has then rushed out of the room. Seized by remorse she hurries back in order to dash the cup to pieces, but unfortunately it is too late, for the King—he appears to have been ill—has taken the poison, left beside him, and is already dead. Claudius is not the brother of the murdered King, but merely the 'first prince of the blood,' so that a marriage between him and the Queen would not be considered as incestuous. He was the first love of Gertrude, who, however, for state considerations had to consent to marry the King. For a long time she lost sight of the man she had loved in her youth, and lived happily; but when she afterwards saw him again the old love awoke, and this only the stronger as Claudius was unjustly treated by the King. She thus became an accomplice in the crime. Young Hamlet immediately succeeds his father to the throne, for in a play performed before the Court at Versailles, the legitimate succession could of course not be overthrown. Moreover the Queen frankly declares that she is free from any love of power; but Hamlet II. is delicate, melancholy, and apparently incapable of governing; he is

> Une ombre, un vain fantôme inhabile à l'empire,
> Que consume l'ennui, que la mort va détruire.

The ambitious and energetic Claudius is thus encouraged to aspire to the throne. With the help of Polonius, his confidential friend, he has formed a party among the people and in the army. He causes money to be distributed, and reports to be spread that it was young Hamlet himself who has put an end to his father's life, and that this is the cause of his melancholy. His scheme is to make his adherents apparently force him to seize the reins of government from Hamlet's incapable hands. Upon Polonius asking what is to become of Hamlet, he answers :—

> Je fais saisir Hamlet ; qu'il aille sans retour
> Achever ses destins dans l'ombre d'une tour . . .
> Un roi dépossédé n'a pas longtemps à vivre,
> Et son tombeau jamais n'est loin de sa prison.

It is less for love—he is a widower and has a grown-up daughter, the beautiful Ophelia—than from political reasons that Claudius intends to marry the Queen, from whom he partially at least conceals his intrigues. 'War is threatening,' he says to her, 'and the army is in need of a leader.' But Gertrude has completely succumbed to her pangs of conscience, and penitently acknowledges her guilt to her confidant, Elvire, apparently for no other reason than to confess. This Elvire is an entirely superfluous character, and without any inner connection with the play. She owes her existence merely to the circumstance that at Versailles it would have been highly unbecoming to let the Queen appear without a lady in waiting. Gertrude resolves as a mother to make amends for the wrong she has done as a wife ; she determines to devote her life to her son, whose coronation festivities she is just about to arrange,

and for whom she demands allegiance from Claudius. She therefore rejects the courtship of the latter, in doing which she also points to the bad impression which their marriage would make upon the people. Claudius, of course, thinks that in their position they are above such considerations.

The accomplices in the crime are by no means easy in their minds. Dreadful phenomena have accompanied the King's death; even his ghost is said to have been seen. Claudius out of suspicion, the Queen out of love, are desirous of fathoming the cause of Hamlet's melancholy, which they think to find in his love for Ophelia. The deceased King has forbidden their marriage from no other motive, as Claudius believes, than to vex him by the impending extinction of his ancient house. Ophelia is exceedingly generous, and ready to renounce her lover, but Gertrude, in spite of the prohibition, is inclined to consent to the marriage, as she considers it the only means to rescue her son from his melancholy. Hamlet, however, to whom Ophelia herself announces this happy turn, draws back most unexpectedly.

Hamlet, to whom we now must turn, has, like Claudius and Gertrude, according to the custom of the French theatre, been provided with a confidant. This is Norceste, who is just travelling in England, but who upon hearing the news of the King's death, hastens home in order to stand by his princely friend in the trying position in which he is placed. Hamlet hears from Norceste, even before his arrival, that the King of England has been mysteriously murdered in his castle, probably by poison administered to him. This raises

a suspicion in him respecting the sudden death of his father; soon after his father twice appears to him in his dreams, discloses the crime, and calls upon him to take vengeance not only upon Claudius, but, more cruelly and unnaturally than in Shakespeare, upon Gertrude too. Hamlet's filial heart revolts against the latter command, while in the fulfilment of the former he is paralysed by his love for the murderer's daughter. He hesitates, and in order to bring forward a stronger proof, he and Norceste agree that the latter shall recite, in the presence of Claudius and the Queen, the story of the regicide just perpetrated in England, during which recital Hamlet is to watch the countenances of the culprits. This test, however, does not produce the desired effect; Claudius, who in Ducis is not at all troubled by pangs of conscience, very composedly says:—

> Laissons à l'Angleterre et son deuil et ses pleurs,
> L'Angleterre en forfaits trop-souvent fut féconde.

Hamlet therefore meditates a more decisive proof, and under these circumstances rejects Ophelia's almost importunate love. Ophelia understands this behaviour as little as she does her lover's hatred of her father, which has not escaped her notice. She follows him with entreaties and reproaches (she once even calls him a 'tigre impitoyable'), but still hopes to reclaim him by her love. When Hamlet complains:—

> Mon malheur est de vivre et non pas de mourir,

the energetic Ophelia answers:—

> Ne gémis plus, mais règne.

Hamlet protests, in the true spirit of patriarchal royalty :—

> Vous le savez, grands dieux, ma plus douce espérance
> Était de voir mon peuple heureux sous ma puissance :

and finally exclaims to his beloved :—

> Laisse-moi mourir seul.
> *Ophélie.* Non, tu ne mourras pas.
> *Hamlet.* Tremblez.
> *Ophélie.* Je ne crains rien.
> *Hamlet.* Fuyez.
> *Ophélie.* Je suis tes pas.

Hamlet is at last obliged to disclose the secret to her, and sets aside his love to devote himself to the duty of revenge, while Ophelia renounces hers in order to follow the voice of blood. Were her father, she says, a criminal in the eyes of the whole world, he would never appear so in hers ; she will cling to him and defend him with her last breath.

In compliance with the command of the apparition of his father, and to the horror of the culprits, Hamlet has the urn which contains his father's ashes brought to the castle from the vault where it had been placed without any appropriate solemnity and without a monument. He then addresses a long monologue to it. In the conversation with his mother, where he again fancies to see his father's ghost, he requires her to take the urn in her arms, and thus to protest her innocence. Gertrude breaks down, and confesses her guilt, not indeed by words but by her behaviour. Hamlet pardons her, and then summons courage to meet Claudius, who at the head of his followers is forcing his way into the castle defended by Norceste. Claudius is killed in

the fight by Hamlet, and the people, headed by Norceste, declare in favour of Hamlet. The Queen pronouncing the punishment incomplete as long as it does not overtake the accomplice of the crime, kills herself, and with her last breath wishes her son a long and happy reign. Heaven is now appeased, and the play concludes with Hamlet's pompous words :—

> Privé de tous les miens dans ce palais funeste,
> Mes malheurs sont comblés ; mais ma vertu me reste ;
> Mais je suis homme et roi ; reservé pour souffrir,
> Je saurai vivre encore ; je fais plus de mourir.

Ophelia is not again spoken of ; she vanishes from the scene without leaving a trace behind her. That she cannot have lost her reason is evident from her whole character. After the confession of the dying Queen, she can no longer have been in doubt as to her father's guilt, and who knows but that she subsequently may have become reconciled to Hamlet, for she clearly possesses as much qualification as inclination to share the throne with him.

This is the plot of Ducis' 'Hamlet,' which throughout makes upon us the impression of a homeopathic dilution of tragedy. The giant Shakespeare is stretched on the Procrustes-bed of the French Academy, and the sublime and mighty destiny that passes over his boards has dwindled down into an ordinary court intrigue. The grand background of Norway and Fortinbras, of Poland and Wittemberg, is wanting ; all non-courtly personages are struck out. There is no trace of a development of the characters, which from living individuals have become dead abstractions. Shakespeare's lovely violet, Ophelia, is transformed into one of those fashion-

able French ladies whom Voltaire designates as 'the daughters of so many heroes.' Both her real, and Hamlet's feigned madness, do not exist. As Ophelia does not die, the objections to her burial and to the grave-diggers are done away with. The theatrical representation arranged by Hamlet has been flattened to a conversation, the King's tomb to a classic urn, which even the court might look upon, and which Voltaire had already introduced in his 'Oreste.' According to classic rules the murder of Claudius takes place behind the scenes, although another reading is purveyed, which allows its representation on the stage should it be desired. The ghost is reduced to the bubble of a dream, or of Hamlet's heated imagination: it appears to no one but him. In a word, all is 'wooden iron'; it is no longer an imitation but a free use of the same materials. Yet with all this, Ducis had the reputation of being an innovator, who, even in his first address to the Academy, ventured to express a gentle doubt as to the omnipotence of the rule, and was bold enough to regard tears in a theatre to be, in certain cases, a more valuable critique than argument.[1] From the French classical standpoint, his way of setting aside difficulties, his observation of the unities, and his management of the plot deserve to be fully acknowledged. Diction and versification proceed in the usual stilted pace of the heroic couplet, and there is no want of pompous sentences, which nowhere remind us of Shakespeare, but partially seem to have been expressly coined for the court. To give but one example: the apparition that appears in Hamlet's dreams complains:

[1] Lacroix, Histoire de l'Influence, 168.

Que du ciel sur les rois les arrêts sont terribles !
Ah ! s'ils me permettaient cet horrible entretien,
La pâleur de mon front passerait sur le tien.
Nos mains se sécheraient en touchant la couronne,
Si nous savions, mon fils, à quel titre il la donne.
Vivant, du rang suprême on sent mal le fardeau,
Mais qu'un sceptre est pesant quand on entre au tombeau.

This mode of adapting or transplanting Shakespeare, which was so much in accordance with the spirit of French classicism, ought to have been sure of Voltaire's approval, had not his selfish vanity prevented him. Was he likely to admit that he was excelled in the field which he had been the first to cultivate? On the contrary, everything that was in the way of his success and renown had to be set aside and dragged into the dust. Hence in a letter to d'Argental, dated October 23, 1769, he writes: 'Vous avez sans doute vu Hamlet; les ombres vont devenir à la mode; j'ai ouvert modestement la carrière; on va y courir à bride abattue. . . . Nous allons tomber dans l'outré et dans le gigantesque; adieu les sentiments du cœur!' This was doubtless an act of perfidy, for Voltaire must have been aware that the ghost in Ducis' was no real ghost like his own in 'Semiramis,' but had been conformed to the best approved rules of French tragedy. But Voltaire's meanness went still further; at his instigation Lekain refused to undertake Hamlet's part, under the pretence that the play was a *rifacimento* of 'Semiramis.'[1] It was not till after Voltaire's death that the part fell into Talma's hands, who acted it with great success. In spite of Voltaire's intrigues the play met with a brilliant reception, the best proof of which

[1] Lacroix, 172.

is that to his 'Hamlet' and his 'Romeo and Juliet,' remodelled in the same spirit in 1772, Ducis owed his place in the Academy, where he filled Voltaire's own *fauteuil* (March 5, 1769). The 'Biographie des Contemporains' overflows with the most extravagant praise of Ducis, and says that his play was Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' free from everything trivial and burlesque, and that Ducis had therein shown himself a clever magician, who by the charm and power of his words had cleared the sun from the mists. At a later time, when the knowledge of Shakespeare in France had advanced to a higher stage, and when it was no longer the Academic but the Shakespearean standard that was applied, Ducis was criticised less favourably, although the critics could not but own that the failure was not so much owing to Ducis himself, as to the prevailing notions of his time, of which he could not free himself.[1]

As Voltaire's views respecting the adaptation of Shakespeare's plays had been carried out by Ducis in the field of poetry, so they were propagated in the field of literary criticism as long as Laharpe (1739–1803) held its reins in his hands. Laharpe, who was allowed to call Voltaire 'papa,' and to correct his poems with impunity, could of course not think differently of Shakespeare than the great 'sage of Ferney' himself. 'King Lear,' for instance, he characterises as 'une des pièces les plus absurdes de Shakespeare.' And yet this same antagonist of Shakespeare, in his 'Warwick,' his best play, which he dedicated to Voltaire, treated

[1] See Villemain, 'Mélanges Hist. et Litt.' iii. 184–185. Barante, 'Mélanges Hist. et Litt.' iii. 217–234. Demogeot, 'Hist. de la Litt. Franç.' (4e ed.) 547–549. Lacroix, 'Histoire de l'Influence de Sh.' 167–172. Reymond, 'Corneille, Shakespeare, et Goethe' (1864), 201 seq.

an English subject, and his 'Barnevelt' (1778), is an imitation of Lillo's 'Merchant of London.' Only in regard to the Ghost in 'Hamlet' he could not but class his 'papa' below Shakespeare; whether he ventured upon this prejudicial comparison in Voltaire's lifetime we do not know. In his 'Cours de Littérature'[1] he says, 'I am far from wishing to compare a monster tragedy like Shakespeare's "Hamlet" with "Semiramis," but I admit that in the English poet the Ghost is much better conceived and excites far greater horror than that of Ninus. Why? Because it reveals what no one knows, and because moreover it addresses none but the Prince of Denmark. This last circumstance is not a matter of indifference; I do not think that a ghost ought to appear on the stage before the eyes of a large assemblage; in the presence of a number of people the horror is lessened by its being shared. The author (viz. of "Semiramis") thinks that the apparition is rendered more impressive by his arrangement (*appareil*); but if we carefully examine why it invariably produces only a moderate effect, it seems to me that the reasons are those which I have just mentioned. I do not presume to place my ideas in the place of those of such a master as Voltaire, and I know that it is a very different thing to point out that which is not good, than to find out what would be better; but it seems to me that if Ninus had appeared to Ninias alone, and in the stillness of the night, and if instead of holding a long conversation with him like the English ghost with Hamlet, he had disclosed the crime in a few words and urged him to seek revenge, it might then have excited far

[1] Éd. nouv., p. Auger, Paris, 1813, vi. 68 seq.

more terror.' Apart from the blame without which Shakespeare's ghost could of course not come off, this criticism coincides pretty nearly with Lessing's—can Laharpe have known of it?—although it does not equal it in thoroughness and depth. It may be mentioned by the way that according to Baretti's opinion Voltaire borrowed his ghost from Muzio Manfredi's 'Semiramide' rather than from 'Hamlet.' That Voltaire himself is silent in regard to this source, and places Shakespeare in the foreground as his model, proves nothing, for Voltaire was most insincere and cunning.

Laharpe in his hatred of Shakespeare was, if possible, outdone by his successor on the critical tripod, Julien Louis Geoffroy (1743–1814), the critical coryphaeus of the Empire. In his opinion even Voltaire had gone too far in his imitation of Shakespeare—so far that he calls him the ape of Shakespeare. His critique on Hamlet is however but the echo of Voltaire's views: 'c'est une composition entièrement barbare,' he says, 'où l'on ne découvre aucune trace des idées et de la manière de Sophocle.'[1]

The most dangerous and effectual opposition to Voltaire lay in the increasing acquaintance with Shakespeare itself which resulted from the translations of his works. The first of these was that of De la Place (1745–1748), to which Ducis owed his knowledge of the original, as Ducis knew but very little English. De la Place does more than honour to his motto, 'Non verbum reddere verbo,' for generally he gives nothing but the contents or an abridgment of the successive scenes, and, as far as 'Hamlet' is concerned, only

[1] Lacroix, 237.

Hamlet's conversation with the Ghost and the King's prayer are translated in verse, *i.e.* in Alexandrines. De la Place, who in the 'Biographie Universelle' is depicted in very black colours by a follower of Laharpe, was educated in an English Jesuit college at St. Omer, but nevertheless his knowledge of English must have been rather deficient, if the anecdote given in the 'Biographie Universelle' be true, that he translated the title of Cibber's 'Love's Last Shift' by 'La dernière Chemise de l'Amour.'

Far greater was the ability which the second Shakespeare translator, Pierre Letourneur, brought to the task, who between 1776–1782 not only published a complete translation of Shakespeare (of course in prose), but also successfully transplanted Young's 'Night Thoughts,' 'Ossian,' 'Clarissa Harlowe,' &c., upon French soil.[1] His Shakespeare is dedicated to the King, and bears the characteristic motto, 'Homo sum, humani nihil (not even Shakespeare!!) a me alienum puto.' This translation, accompanied as it was by judiciously selected notes, could not fail to bring the poet essentially nearer to the French reading public. That it is not wanting in inaccuracies, omissions, and other liberties, is but natural and pardonable. Horatio's words (I. 2), 'A truant disposition,' are translated 'Ho! une folle ardeur de voyager.' In I. 4, the two passages, 'The king doth wake to-night,' &c., and 'The dram of ill Doth all the noble substance,' &c., are omitted. Instead of 'You are a fishmonger,' Hamlet says to Polonius, II. 2, 'Vous êtes un artisan.' Le-

[1] Letourneur (1736–1788) was assisted in his translation of Shakespeare by Catuelan and Rutlidge, which latter name seems to betray an Englishman (Routledge?).

tourneur also gives a number of stage directions, in regard to which we cannot ascertain whether they are taken from some English acting edition, or, what is more probable, whether they are the translator's own invention. Thus at the very beginning we read : 'Le théâtre représente une Esplanade devant le Palais ; sur la gauche est une grande tour avec l'Étendard du Dannemarck déployé aux vents ; la mer est en face, et une jettée s'avance sur le rivage ; la lune éclaire foiblement.' And again, 'Le Spectre paroît au fond de l'Esplanade ; il est armé de toutes pièces ; à sa jambe gauche il traîne une chaîne, dans sa main droite il porte le bâton de commandement : la visière de son casque est levée ; sa chevelure est grise et ses traits démontrent la douleur.' As a specimen of the translation, the well-known monologue may be quoted. '*Hamlet se croyant seul*: Être ou ne pas être? c'est là la question. . . . S'il est plus noble à l'âme de souffrir les traits poignans de l'injuste fortune, ou se révoltant contre cette multitude de maux, de s'opposer au torrent, et les finir? Mourir,—dormir—rien de plus, et par ce sommeil, dire : Nous mettons un terme aux angoisses du coeur, et à cette foule de plaies et de douleurs, l'héritage naturel de cette masse de chair. . . . Ce point où tout est consommé devoit être désiré avec ferveur.—Mourir—Dormir—Dormir? Réver peut-être ; oui, voilà le grand obstacle. Car de savoir quels songes peuvent survenir dans ce sommeil de la mort, après que nous nous sommes dépouillés de cette enveloppe mortelle, c'est de quoi nous forcer à faire une pause. Voilà l'idée qui donne une si longue vie à la calamité. Car quel homme voudroit supporter les traits

et les injures du tems, les injustices de l'oppresseur, les outrages de l'orgueilleux, les tortures de l'amour méprisé, les longs délais de la loi, l'insolence des grands en place, et les avilissans rebuts que le mérite patient essuie de l'homme sans âme; lorsqu'avec un poinçon il pourroit lui-même se procurer le repos? Qui voudroit porter tous ces fardeaux et suer et gémir sous le poids d'une laborieuse vie, si ce n'est que la crainte de quelque avenir après la mort . . . cette contrée ignorée dont nul voyageur ne revient, plonge la volonté dans une affreuse perplexité, et nous fait préférer de supporter les maux que nous sentons, plutôt que de fuir vers d'autres maux que nous ne connaissons pas? Ainsi la conscience fait de nous tous des poltrons; ainsi tout le feu de la résolution la plus déterminée se décolore et s'éteint devant la pâle lueur de cette pensée. Les projets enfantés avec le plus d'énergie et d'audace, détournent à cet aspect leur cours, et retournent dans le néant de l'imagination.—Cessons (*appercevant Ophélia*), la belle Ophélia?—(*Il s'approche d'elle*). O jeune vierge, que mes fautes ne soient pas oubliées dans vos pieuses oraisons.'

In his preface, Letourneur had ventured to extol Shakespeare as the 'creative god of the noble art of the theatre, which from his hands received existence and perfection.' No matter that Diderot sided with the translator, the grey-headed Voltaire and his faithful squire Laharpe regarded this praise only as a malignant and base depreciation of the great French poets.[1]

[1] 'Cette traduction,' said Laharpe, 'a été faite dans l'intention de rabaisser les plus grands dramatiques français.' See Grimm, 'Correspondence,' i. 346.

Voltaire, who from the very first had never been a sincere admirer and friend of Shakespeare, burst into a fury. A scoundrel (*faquin*) like Letourneur, he wrote to D'Alembert, ought to be tied to the pillory of Parnassus; he declared him to be a *Pierrot*, in the same way as he had several times characterised Shakespeare himself as a *Gilles*.[1] This shows the vexation which Voltaire must have felt at his own shortsightedness; for, as he was generally sharp-sighted, he should have been aware, as Paul Duport remarks, that Shakespeare's genius was not one of those to which one could call out—so far and no further. The barbarian, the Jack-at-a-fair, and the drunken savage whom he had introduced to the chosen French people, half by way of ridicule and half as a warning, was now, even before the great Monsieur de Voltaire had closed his eyes, proclaimed the creative genius of dramatic poetry! If this could be done in his lifetime, what was to happen after his death? Inasmuch as Voltaire flattered himself with the belief that it was owing to him that France had become acquainted with English poetry, he now certainly wished everything undone which he had ever said or written on the subject.

During the great Revolution and the time of the Empire, the French naturally stopped their English studies, the two nations being opposed not merely politically, but also on fields of battle. The stoppage was however by no means a total one, and Chateaubriand

[1] The similarity between these designations and the Christian names of Shakespeare and Letourneur—Will and Pierre—was evidently what tickled him most.

did not think it at all sufficient. In his Essai on Shakespeare, written in 1801, he raises loud complaints about the discord in the literary world. 'One portion of our *gens de lettres*, he writes, admire only the works of foreigners, while the others hold fast to our own old school.' 'If,' he goes on to say, 'the French continue to study foreign languages and to inundate us with translations, our language will soon lose that native flower and those gallicisms which constituted its grace and genius.' To these remarks we subjoin the criticism on Hamlet, contained in his 'Essai sur la Littérature Anglaise,'[1] although this most superficial and unconnected work belongs to a later period. 'Dans Hamlet,' he there writes, 'dans cette tragédie des aliénés, dans ce Bedlam royal, où tout le monde est insensé et criminel, où la démence simulée se joint à la démence vraie, où le fou contrefait le fou, où les morts eux-mêmes fournissent à la scène la tête d'un fou, dans cet odéon des ombres, où l'on ne voit que des spectres, où l'on n'entend que des rêveries et le qui-vive des sentinelles, que le criaillement des oiseaux de nuit et le bruit de la mer, Gertrude raconte qu'Ophélia s'est noyée, etc.' From these few lines the reader will at once perceive the position in which Chateaubriand, the precursor of the Romanticists, stands in regard to Shakespeare; he acknowledges his merit and genius if judged from the standpoint of Shakespeare's own time, but he completely condemns him if judged from the standpoint of art. In a word, he pretty nearly agrees with Voltaire in considering him a drunken savage.

The political storms had the most beneficial and

[1] Bruxelles et Leipzig, 1836, i. 178.

emancipating influence upon French poetry. It now no longer rotated as formerly round the court at Versailles or round the Academy; it extended its horizon and was brought into contact with other nations and their literatures. When therefore the Restoration again brought leisure and inclination for studying language and literature, men turned with doubled zeal to Germany and England. In spite of the temporary hatred, the military invasion of these two nations left behind it—like the inundation of the Nile—a fructifying sediment. Both this inundation, and still more the wonderful increase of the material and intellectual intercourse of nations, greatly promoted the study of foreign languages and literatures in France. The general feeling had become more friendly to Shakespeare, as the French Revolution, like Shakespeare's poetry, though in a different way, had fought for the emancipation of the individual; the barriers of the prevailing conventionalities in society as well as in literature had been thrown down. In this sense (though in no other) the Revolution had worked in the same direction as Shakespeare, and the course in which French intellect henceforth developed itself inclined to Shakespeare and English literature in general. There are three directions in which Shakespeare's influence made itself especially perceptible—first, the representation of his principal dramas by English actors at Paris; secondly, the critical writings of the members of the Sorbonne; and lastly, the revival of dramatic poetry by the Romantic school. In all these directions, 'Hamlet' again plays a more or less prominent part.

In the year 1821 Guizot's and Pichot's new edition

of Letourneur's translation [1] again directed the attention of the reading public to Shakespeare, and in the following year English actors for the first time appeared at the Théâtre de la Porte St. Martin. According to Börne's charming description,[2] they completely failed. In place of the six performances which had been announced, only two could be given, 'Othello,' and the 'School for Scandal.' The voices of the actors were drowned in the shouts, '*A bas les Anglais, point d'étrangers en France.*' The gens d'armes were obliged to interfere and to quell the riot, and the undertaking had to be given up.[3] The way had nevertheless been paved, public opinion changed with remarkable quickness, and a few years later (1827-28), the companies of Covent Garden, of Drury Lane, and Dublin, were as successful as their colleagues had previously been unfortunate. They established an English theatre of their own at Paris, where Kemble played 'Hamlet,' and Miss Smithson shone as the principal actress. Among other plays, they produced 'Romeo and Juliet' (with Garrick's conclusion), the 'Merchant of Venice,' 'Othello,' 'Macbeth,' and 'Hamlet,' which latter was

[1] Guizot undertook the revision of six tragedies, ten histories, and three comedies; the rest fell to Pichot. The 'Hamlet' of this edition was translated by Barante.

[2] 'Gesammelte Schriften,' v. 191–201.

[3] Barante, in his essay 'Sur Othello et sur l'état de l'art dramatique en France, en 1830,' printed in Guizot's 'Shakespeare et son Temps' (Paris 1858), p. 267, says: 'La prise de possession de Calais et de Dunkerque par les troupes de Sa Majesté britannique n'aurait certainement pas excité une plus patriotique colère. Gardien des pures doctrines, dépositaire des saines traditions en matière de goût, le public des boulevards prit fait et cause dans cette affaire, avec une violence inimaginable, et sans l'intervention de la police, Dieu sait si les pauvres histrions d'outre-mer n'auraient pas été lapidés.'

received with enthusiastic applause.[1] 'La lecture de ces chants de folie,' says Paul Duport, in speaking of Ophelia's songs, 'serait fastidieuse dans une traduction; mais la voix et la pantomime expressive de Miss Smithson ont chez nous produit dans cette scène un enthousiasme qui allait jusq'au fanatisme.' It was owing to these representations that Paul Duport published his 'Essais littéraires sur Shakespeare,'[2] as he himself admits in the preface. 'Shakespeare,' he writes, 'after having long been imitated, occasionally improved' (was it by Ducis?) 'but more frequently travestied, is at length presented to a French audience in his original shape. Thus it has become an almost absolute necessity to know Shakespeare well.' In order to administer to this 'absolute necessity,' he gives analyses of the whole number of the plays, 'for,' he exclaims, 'what hard reading Shakespeare is to the "*gens de monde*;" even professed scholars can scarcely tolerate their length and tediousness, *tant le fatras y déborde le sublime*.' Here then we have again the old story of the grains of wheat among the chaff. That Duport's analyses bear no comparison with those of Gervinus or Kreyssig need hardly be said. They are little more than descriptions of scenes, devoid of sound aesthetic criticism, and do not enter upon a discussion of the fundamental ideas of the plays or of their dramatic

[1] Lacroix, 294 seq. Compare Goethe's Works ('Auswärtige Literatur und Volkspoesie'). Friedr. von Raumer, 'Lebenserinnerungen und Briefwechsel' (Leipzig, 1861), ii. 230–235. To Miss Smithson, however, who appears to have been the lessee of this Théâtre Anglais, it proved to be a losing concern; she subsequently married the well-known composer, Hector Berlioz. See 'Mémoires de Hector Berlioz, membre de l'Institut de France,' &c., &c. Paris, 1870. (1874.)

[2] Paris, 1828; 2 tomes.

structure. The author only knows a few things here and there, but nevertheless pompously concludes his judgment of Shakespeare by placing him by the side of Homer as *le poëte par excellence*. From what he says about 'Hamlet,' it will be clear what he thinks of Shakespeare in general. In the first place it is surprising, that in face of the delight which the English theatre is said to have excited in the French metropolis, Duport still maintains the old Voltairean point of view, and does nothing but paraphrase Voltaire's criticisms. 'Hamlet' is to him 'the most famous, but at the same time the most unequal of Shakespeare's plays; it is a chaos pervaded by a few rays of light. One quarter of an hour we fancy ourselves with Plato, and the rest of the time in Bedlam.' Goethe, he thinks, overshot the mark; he compares him to a billiard-player, who in endeavouring to make a very fine stroke does not touch the ball at all. Duport asks, 'What is Hamlet's character? Is it actual or feigned madness, or a mixture of both? Or did not Shakespeare rather intend to portray one of those intellects of the north which are so active in thought and so slow in action, which dream everything and venture nothing? The reader may now judge for himself!' This is indeed getting off cheaply; as if such a judgment were a task for the reader's noonday siesta. Ophelia's incomparable description of Hamlet's leave-taking (II. 1), 'He took me by the wrist and held me hard,' Duport considers so improper in the mouth of a young girl, that he feels it his duty to omit it. The language which Hamlet uses in speaking to his father's ghost (Old mole, &c.), according to him is the most grotesque and disrespectful ever

attempted, '*sur les tréteaux de la farce*.' On the other hand he avers, that it would not be easy in ancient or modern writers to find anything superior to Hamlet's monologue (To be or not to be), 'provided that an exaggerated delicacy do not lay too much stress upon some features of doubtful taste which are overbalanced by the beauty of the rest.' Duport is then shocked at the heartless words (*duretés*) which Hamlet addresses to Ophelia, words which, 'to borrow the expression of one of our (viz. French) comic writers, a fop would not address even to a lady's-maid.' A comic writer may very well use such an expression, but a serious critic ought not to compare the flirtations of a fop and a lady's-maid, with the appalling tragedy of 'Hamlet.' 'After the murder of Polonius,' he continues, 'Hamlet no longer spares anything; he overwhelms the Queen with the most vehement reproaches, and she in vain implores mercy. The Ghost appears, visible only to the Prince, and commands him to spare his mother and to treat her with less cruelty. This idea is the very reverse of what would be tragic and theatrical.' Ducis, indeed, as we have seen, has taken the opposite road, that is to say, he has left Hamlet only the choice between matricide and disobedience to the commands of the Ghost. The murder of a mother cannot be classed under the head of punishment or of revenge. Can it be tragic that the father's ghost should urge his son to commit a crime? For it is only in this light that the modern Christian, and especially the Germanic mind, can look at a revenge taken upon a mother. Even Orestes was pursued by the Erinnyes for laying hands upon his mother, and it was only after long

wanderings and penance that he got rid of them. Athena herself had to put her vote in the urn in order to obtain an acquitting verdict for him. Alfieri, in treating this subject, found it therefore necessary to make Orestes commit the act in a fit of mad despair. Shakespeare has spread a veil over the mother's guilt, which Ducis, with an unwise and unpoetic hand, has rent asunder. Nowhere, perhaps, do we see Shakespeare's superiority, and the chasm which separates him from the French mode of thinking and feeling, more clearly than in this very point.

Thus it will be seen that from Voltaire's day till the beginning of the second decade of the present century, that is, during a period of nearly a hundred years, no real progress was made in the criticism of 'Hamlet,' and, we may add, of Shakespeare in general. A change, however, was accomplished in the field of literary criticism with no less surprising rapidity than in that of theatrical representation; and we may with just pride ascribe this change in no small degree to the influence of German literature. The three most distinguished members of the Sorbonne, Guizot, Cousin, and Villemain, had imbued their minds with the study of German literature, and especially of German philosophy, with which the study of English literature went hand in hand. From both these fountains they supplied their countrymen with Germanic elements, which in the most recent development of French literature have become of increasing importance.

Guizot accompanied his edition of Letourneur's translation with an essay 'Sur la Vie et les Œuvres de Shakespeare,' and with historical and critical notes,

which were afterwards published together as an independent work.[1] On the whole his criticism of Shakespeare agrees with the general French opinion, which was and is that the poet excels in substance but fails in form; that it is marvellous how he contrives to represent the motives, passions, and ideas of men, in a word their whole inner life, upon the stage; that he is the profoundest and the most dramatic moralist, but that he frequently allows his characters to speak in a constrained, strange, irregular, and unnatural language, which in regard to both the poet's beauties and faults, is wonderfully in unison with the genius of the English tongue. The French translations of Shakespeare, he continues, must necessarily be defective in one of two ways; if they are to be conscientious and literal, then the poet's faults appear more offensive in their new dress than in the original; if, on the contrary, he is translated freely, and his language adapted to the genius of the French, he is deprived of a portion of his wealth, his power, and originality. In both cases therefore equal injustice is done to him. Guizot says that since Voltaire's time the question has become in so far altered that Shakespeare's greatness and genius are no longer disputed, but that another and more important question has arisen, the question as to whether Shakespeare's dramatical system ought not to be preferred to that of Voltaire. This is where the course of ideas has led to; Guizot does not undertake to decide the question, he only wishes to point out the causes of the change, but he is far from accomplishing even this

[1] Shakespeare et son Temps. Étude littéraire par M. Guizot. Paris, Didier et C^ie^.

task. In the biographical portion of his essay he manifests a striking want of critical acumen, as he puts implicit faith in the anecdotes related by Aubrey, such as Shakespeare's killing of calves with pathetic speeches, his drinking-match at Bidford, his ballads against Sir Thomas Lucy, and his holding horses in front of the theatre. No doubt occurs to him about the testament of John Shakespeare, said to have been found in 1770 under the roof of the house in which Shakespeare was born, and he accordingly considers the poet's father, if not the poet himself, to have been a good Catholic. The whole of his biographical as well as critical discussion is so superficial that none but a French reader can profit by it. Guizot does not consider 'Hamlet' to be Shakespeare's most beautiful drama; 'Macbeth,' and as he thinks, 'Othello,' stand higher, but 'Hamlet' is perhaps the play which contains the most striking proofs of the poet's sublimest beauties as well as of his most offensive faults. Nowhere has he revealed the inner life of a great mind with greater originality and depth, and at the same time with greater dramatical effect; nowhere, however, has he given himself up so much at one moment to the horrible, and at another to the burlesque fancies of his imagination, to the boundless productivity of a mind which is driven to bring to light its ideas without discrimination, and which finds pleasure in giving them a striking expression without troubling itself about their pure and natural form. As usual, Shakespeare has not been at pains to invent or to arrange the fable of 'Hamlet' (how untrue!), but has taken the facts as he found them in Saxo Grammaticus or in Belleforest. Guizot here in-

volves himself in a contradiction, for after having rightly remarked that it was the character of 'Hamlet' that induced the poet to take up the subject, he cannot help admitting that in Shakespeare's hands the feigned madness has become something very different from what it is in the Danish chronicle; that in Shakespeare we have rather to deal with a moral condition, with a mental disease which, in certain epochs and under certain conditions of the State, overpowers men, and even attacks the noblest and most talented, transporting them into a state that borders upon insanity. This, however, was neither a disease of the Middle Ages nor of Shakespeare's own time; Shakespeare has, as it were, foreseen it. This moral disease characterised by Guizot, this world-sorrow (Weltschmerz), as it may be called in one word, is not only expressed in Hamlet's four great monologues, but in all that he says; it is this, and not his own personal troubles and dangers, that is the cause of his melancholy and madness.

In order, continues Guizot, to make this gloomy disease not only interesting but affecting, Shakespeare has endowed the sick man with the most attractive qualities; he has made him handsome, popular, generous, affectionate, and tender, so as, in some degree, to reconcile us to the character of the hero, to the doubts and curses with which his philosophical melancholy oppresses us. At the same time Shakespeare, with the instinct which never forsakes the true poet, has diffused the same gloomy colouring over the whole drama; the ghost of the murdered King from first to last rules the course of the play, even the scene with the gravediggers, which Guizot's countrymen so gene-

rally condemn, is in his opinion quite suited to the idea of the play, in spite of its comic elements (p. 169). No less in keeping is the conclusion, which is just as mournful as Hamlet's thoughts; the Ghost seems to have arisen out of its grave only to drag the guilty as well as the innocent down with it, into its dark kingdom—death hovers over the whole play, and the Norwegians, who have taken no part in the action, alone survive. But Shakespeare has not only furnished a grand picture of a mind, he has linked it to a no less grand dramatic effect, a stage effect which is nowhere more complete and striking than in this very play. Guizot finds the cause of this effect in the perfect blending of unity with variety; a single impression prevails over all, but it is of a different kind, according to the character, the mental disposition, and the conditions of the life of the different personages. Hence the impression which 'Hamlet' makes upon the audience is irresistible, it enthrals the senses and the imagination, and excites the deepest depths of the hearer's soul. The enjoyment is only disturbed by the confusing accumulation of persons and useless incidents, by the long-winded reflexions in which the poet delights, and by the astonishing mixture of coarse and affected language. It is just in 'Hamlet' that these faults abound. As to the poet's genius, Guizot winds up his criticism of 'Hamlet' by saying that Shakespeare stands unrivalled, but that he cannot serve as a model in the high and pure regions of art.

Cousin, the second among the critical triumvirate of the Sorbonne, has given no other proof of his having occupied himself with English literature than the lec-

tures on Scotch philosophy which he delivered in his earliest years. Villemain, however, the third triumvir, though he cared but little about German literature, entered the deeper into that of England, as is proved by his 'Cours de Littérature.' He too has written an 'Essai littéraire sur Shakespeare,'[1] in which he states the change that has taken place in the estimation of Shakespeare since Voltaire's first attempt at acclimatising him. 'Shakespeare's renown,' he says, 'seemed in France at first somewhat paradoxical and scandalous, to-day it threatens to injure the old fame of our theatre.' He expresses his doubts as to whether the Academy is still a fitting place in which to pour forth abuse against Shakespeare and to fling anathemas at him, as Voltaire did; even Academies are subject to the spirit of the age. In the main, however, Villemain does not advance beyond the standpoint of the German 'Sturm und Drang'-period, that is to say, he looks upon Shakespeare as a gigantic genius, with extraordinary beauties, but with as extraordinary faults, which does not consider itself bound by any rules. Shakespeare, he thinks, belongs to England, and there he ought to remain, for his poetry is not, like that of the Greeks, destined to furnish other nations with models of the most beautiful forms of imagination; he therefore opposes all imitations of Shakespeare. An animated description is given of the impression which Hamlet produces upon the French: 'Do not by any means,' says Villemain, 'strike out of this tragedy the work and the jokes of the gravediggers, as Garrick attempted

[1] In his 'Mélanges Historiques et Littéraires' (Paris, 1827), iii. 141–187.

to do; remain present during this terrible buffoonery, and you will see horror and merriment spread over the immense audience with the rapidity of lightning. By the glaring, but rather mysterious light of the gas which illuminates the house, amid the wealth and gaiety beaming from the first balcony, you will see the prettiest heads turned eagerly towards those churchyard ruins (*ces débris funèbres*) erected upon the stage. Youth and beauty contemplate with insatiable curiosity these images of annihilation, these minute details of death. The strange jokes which are interwoven in the play of the characters seem, every now and again, to free the spectators of the weight that oppresses them; constant laughter bursts forth from all tiers. While attentive to the play, the coldest countenances will alternately appear sad or merry, and the statesman may be seen smiling over the sarcasms of the gravedigger who is endeavouring to find the difference between the skull of a courtier and that of a clown.' On the character of Hamlet, Villemain makes the following remark: 'By a strange combination,' he says, 'Shakespeare has represented feigned madness no less frequently than real madness; nay, he has even contrived to mix them together in the strange character of Hamlet, and to blend in it flashes of reason with the tricks of crafty simulation and the involuntary distraction of the mind.'

Guizot and Villemain were succeeded by Barante, celebrated as a statesman, and still more so as the historian of the Dukes of Burgundy. He too was a zealous admirer of German and English literature; he translated some plays of Schiller for the 'Théâtre

Étranger,' and wrote a treatise on Hamlet (1824),[1] in which he made a great stride in advance, and penetrated deeper into the mystery of this tragedy than all his predecessors. He was the first to conceive 'Hamlet' as a work of art, supported and pervaded by a single grand fundamental thought, and to understand the organic and logical sequence and necessity of what his predecessors had regarded as faulty excrescences, the scene of the gravediggers not excepted. Nay, according to him, Shakespeare has given to none of his works a more express, a steadier and firmer unity of intention and colouring, than to 'Hamlet.' Whether the fundamental idea of the play as established by him can be accepted as correct is a different and secondary question. Barante believes that the reason why this tragedy enjoys such an extraordinary reputation lies in the circumstance that it proves more than any other of Shakespeare's works the wonderful art of the poet to charm the common people and at the same time to delight enlightened and thoughtful minds. In 'Hamlet' he thinks Shakespeare allowed his genius to run its own free course in all the universality, the fulness, and variety of its wealth; he here revealed his own view of the world and of human nature, and withal gave expression to the spirit of his age. 'Hamlet,' according to Barante, was written at a time when the human mind, after having been long enthralled by the ties of an imperfect civilisation, began to take a new start, a start full of activity, zeal, and thirst for knowledge. Hence in 'Hamlet,' he says, we find all the effects of that astonishment and that intoxication

[1] 'Mélanges Historiques et Littéraires' (Paris, 1824), iii. 217–234.

into which learning and philosophy threw the first generations which gave themselves up to them with all the enthusiasm of novelty. The luxury of the newly-acquired knowledge, the accumulation of reasonings and the profusion of reflections, necessarily constituted the character of those centuries in which science and mental culture were revived. The hero of this play is especially formed according to the ideas of that still naïve period. He has studied in one of those German universities where, even at that time, *i.e.*, in Shakespeare's day, the principles of things were examined metaphysically, where even at that time men lived in an ideal world, and where the dreams of men led to enquiries into the inner life. His head is filled with uncertainty, doubt, and weakness, he is what the people would call 'an overwrought student,' who has become crazed from pure study. After having seen his father's ghost, and having determined to feign madness, the bounds between his reason and his madness can no longer be recognised.

However, not Hamlet alone, Barante continues, but all the characters of the play reason without acting; all of them like 'à parler sans conclure;' all have a trait of pedantry. It is the same with the King, who shows his ingenuity and cleverness in words only, and does not know how to meet what he sees coming. It is the same with Polonius, who displays the shallowness of the minister and courtier in professional language. It is the same with Laertes, who even expresses true sorrow in the most bombastic language. It is the same lastly with the Ghost, who, with self-complacent learning, expounds the pharmaceutical properties as-

cribed in those days to the juice of the hemlock. The women alone are exempt from this fault, for which reason the poet is complimented by the remark of the critic, that no other dramatist has succeeded so well in representing the difference of the two sexes in his characters.

This is evidently the weakest part of Barante's ingenious essay. He has not fathomed the intentional contrast in the characters of Hamlet and Laertes, and has judged the King wrongly. In fact these observations do not hit the essence of the characters. So much the more deserving of notice are his remarks about the structure of the play, which remind us of Goethe's words (whom Barante however does not mention): 'The hero has no plot, but the play is full of plot.' 'Every scene,' says Barante, 'even more so than every character, is intended to make us conscious of the hollowness and nothingness of human affairs; the course of the action seems to be conceived in the spirit of scepticism. These are not occurrences prepared and brought on by the will, the foresight, or the passions of men; this is not the leading-string of fate directing the actions of men to a goal opposed to their own will, as in ancient tragedy. Neither is it the free human will, acting with its full force and yet condemned to pursue a course preordained by fate, such as we see in "Macbeth." Chance, and not forethought, seems to draw one event after the other, without showing us any direction, any moral object. It is true, the guilty are punished, but by accident, without there being any kind of necessity, any kind of connection revealing divine intervention between the crime and the punishment. Innocence is

dragged down into the same abyss. Hamlet, in his dreamy doubts, has lost his sense for what is good and evil; he has become weak, hard-hearted, cruel, and disloyal. We pity him for what he does, but his punishment does not appear unjust.—"*Qu'est ce que de nous!*" is the moral recurring at the end of every scene.'

In regard to the Ghost, Barante sides with Shakespeare against Voltaire, and appeals to Lessing. Hamlet's conversation with his mother he considers as 'du plus haut pathétique,' in direct opposition to Duport.[1] He looks upon the burial of Ophelia as the real conclusion of the play, for the solution of the plot, according to him, is the weakest part of the play, inasmuch as there is no plot to be unravelled. 'The moral disposition,' he says, 'in which we are left by this tragedy has something undecided and fatiguing about it; doubt has presided over the whole, and even weighs down the solution.'

Simultaneously with the efforts of the Sorbonne to provide new nourishment for the French mind through the study of foreign literatures, and to obtain new foundations for criticism and aesthetics, there commenced that revolution in French poetry which proceeded from the Romanticists. The results of foreign influences were here practically applied. The influences which Shakespeare exercised upon the new school cannot be examined here, the less so as the aims and exertions of the Romanticists were especially directed to the

[1] In order to avoid misunderstandings, it may be expressly stated that Duport's work appeared four years later than Barante's essay. Duport, in fact, followed in the wake of the Voltaire-Laharpe school, without having profited from Barante.

historical drama, whereas Shakespeare's great tragedies in the main remained unnoticed by them. It is only in the offshoots of Romanticism—if we may use the expression—that 'Hamlet' reappears, particularly in George Sand's 'Étude sur Hamlet,'[1] and in Alexandre Dumas' translation, or rather stage arrangement of the play, in which he was assisted by Paul Meurice; 'the true "Hamlet" perfectly reproduced by a master's hand,' if we are to believe Lacroix (335).

Dumas' and Paul Meurice's 'Hamlet' was represented for the first time at the Théâtre Historique, on December 15, 1847.[2] Dumas was a very clever manufacturer of dramas, who aimed at nothing but stage effect, as the present instance abundantly proves. He merely considered 'Hamlet' as a highly effective subject, which with reckless freedom he adapted to the taste of the Parisian public. While on the one hand he has abridged the play throughout, and even struck out the character of Osrick, he does not scruple on the other to insert, not only single lines and speeches, but even a whole scene (I. 5). Various scenes have been transposed for the purpose of avoiding the changes of scenery; for apart from the division into acts the play is divided into eight parts, and it is only at the beginning of each of these parts that a change of decoration occurs. For this reason Hamlet does not go into his mother's closet, but she, at his request, has to

[1] This essay, in spite of repeated endeavours to procure it, has, unfortunately, remained inaccessible to me.

[2] According to Lacroix, Dumas had previously transferred some traits from Hamlet upon his Lorenzo, in his play of the same name: 'c'est le même caractère,' says Lacroix, 'qui doit se cacher sous un masque, là de folie, ici de lâcheté; ce sont les mêmes desseins à accomplir.' This does not seem to show any special resemblance.

come to him. For the same purpose the churchyard scene has been transferred to the fourth act. There are however numerous other of the adapter's inventions which are not due to this circumstance. Among these we may mention that Hamlet's demand to change the place, when the Ghost commands his comrades to 'swear!' is put into the mouth of Horatio; that Hamlet presents a ring to the player who is to recite the speech inserted by him; that Ophelia, when the King and her father watch her meeting with the Prince, is kneeling at a *prie-dieu*; that Lucianus (in the play), instead of being the King's nephew is made his brother, and pours the poison into the sleeper's mouth instead of his ear; and lastly, that Hamlet, after the murder of Polonius, remembering Ophelia, exclaims:—

> Polonius! ah! je suis bien maudit!
> Celle qui portera le poids de ma folie
> Sera donc toi toujours, Ophélie! Ophélie! &c.

As in Ducis, the frame of the play is narrowed by the omission of the Norwegian background. Laertes does not go to France, and Hamlet is not sent to England, but conceals himself for some time on the sea-shore, near a church, where he remains ignorant of Ophelia's death till after she is buried. The most thorough alteration is in the conclusion: Hamlet, who is fighting with Laertes, is not once hit by him, succeeds in wrenching his rapier from him, and out of politeness presents him with his own. Thus he gets the poisoned weapon into his hands, with which he first mortally wounds Laertes and then the King, after Laertes has confessed their unsuccessful treachery. Then the Ghost reappears and pronounces judgment on the prepetrators of

the crime. Laertes and the Queen, who pray for mercy, are pardoned. The Ghost first turns to the former, with these words :—

> Ton sang trop prompt t'entraîna vers l'abîme,
> Laërte, et le Seigneur t'a puni par ton crime.
> Mais tu le trouveras, car il sonde les cœurs,
> Moins sévère là-haut. Laërte—*prie et meurs !*

The Queen is addressed in the following words :—

> Ta faute était ton amour même,
> Âme trop faible, et Dieu vous aime quand on aime !
> Va, ton cœur a lavé sa honte avec ses pleurs :
> Femme ici, reine au ciel, Gertrude—*espère et meurs !*

Claudius alone is not forgiven. The Ghost says :—

> Pas de pardon ! Va, meurtrier infâme !
> Pour tes crimes hideux, dans leurs cercles de flamme,
> Les enfers dévorants n'ont pas trop de douleurs !
> Va, traître incestueux, va !—*désespère et meurs !*

When Hamlet in his desolation asks, what the poor orphan has now to do on earth, and what is to be his punishment for having caused the death of four persons instead of the one culprit, the Ghost utters the final words : '*Tu vivras !*' He is not even reproved for the murder of Polonius ! It will be perceived at once that by such an act of judgment the part of the Ghost has been essentially altered, and indeed perverted ; but the Parisian public are not wont to reflect about such matters, and least of all so when such a striking effect is offered.[1] Hamlet's survival need not be criticised,

[1] At the desire of the directors of the Odéon, Emile Deschamps' translation of Macbeth, performed in 1848, had to be 'improved' much in the same manner, by the witches reappearing and solving the complication. This patched-up version of 'Macbeth' had a run of 100 representations. See Chatelain, 'Hamlet; Tragédie en 5 Actes de W. Shakespeare, trad. en Vers Français.' Londres, 1864. Introd. x. seq.

since it has been characterised by M. de Chatelain in the passage referred to below, as '*une idée burlesque.*'

In the face of such alterations, it does not signify much that the characters, especially that of Ophelia, are entirely Frenchified, and that Hamlet's madness has almost become imperceptible. Still less is it to be wondered at that the prose passages are turned into verse. Diction and versification are utterly different from what they are in Ducis, and, indeed, they may be said to have been improved, so far as regards the freer treatment of the verse. At times, however, to our feeling at least, they make the impression as if the muse instead of the cothurnus had put on the most modern soccus; thus for instance, when Ophelia, whom her father is the first to lead to the conviction that Hamlet loves her, exclaims :—

Il m'aime, il m'aime, oh que je suis heureuse !

Or when Laertes says :—

Le dernier jour, ce monde et l'autre, peu m'importe !
Que je venge mon père et que Satan m'emporte !

Hamlet on one occasion characterises himself with the words :—

Je suis bon diable
Et veux tout ce qu'on veut.

The reader will be able to judge for himself if we again give the well-known monologue as a specimen of the translator's style :—

Être ou n'être pas, voilà la question !
Que faut-il admirer ? la résignation
Acceptant à genoux la fortune outrageuse,
Ou la force luttant sur la mer orageuse
Et demandant le calme aux tempêtes ?—Mourir !
Dormir ! et rien de plus, et puis, ne plus souffrir !

Fuir ces mille tourments pour lesquels il faut naître !
Mourir ! Dormir !—Dormir ! qui sait ? rêver peut-être !
Peut-être ?—ah ! tout est là ! Quels rêves peupleront
Le sommeil de la mort, lorsque sous notre front
Ne s'agiteront plus la vie et la pensée ?
Doute affreux qui nous courbe à l'ornière tracée !
Eh ! qui supporterait tant de honte et de deuil,
L'injure des puissants, l'outrage de l'orgueil,
Les lenteurs de la loi, la profonde souffrance,
Que creuse dans le cœur l'amour sans espérance,
La lutte du génie et du vulgaire épais ? . . .
Quand un fer aiguisé donne si bien la paix !
Qui ne rejetterait son lourd fardeau d'alarmes
Et mouillerait encor de sueurs et de larmes
L'âpre et rude chemin ? si l'on ne craignait pas
Quelque chose, dans l'ombre, au delà du trépas !
Ce pays inconnu, ce monde qu'on ignore,
D'où n'a pu revenir nul voyageur encore—
C'est là ce qui d'horreur glace la volonté !
Et, devant cette nuit, l'esprit épouvanté
Garde les maux réels sous lesquels il succombe
De préférence aux maux incertains de la tombe !
Puis, ardente couleur, la résolution
Descend aux tons pâlis de la réflexion ;
Puis, l'effrayant aspect troublant toutes les tâches
Des plus déterminés le doute fait des lâches !
Ophélie (à part).
Son rêve plane en haut, mon amour pleure en bas,
Aveuglé de clartés, il ne me verra pas !
Hamlet (apercevant Ophélie).
Ophélie ! ô jadis ma vie et ma lumière !
Parle de mes péchés, ange, dans ta prière !

One merit must even be conceded to Dumas' version, that is, of having aided in introducing Shakespeare to the widest—not merely literary—circles of the French people, and of having thereby assisted in the transforming development of the French mind. It was performed 135 successive times at the Théâtre Historique, and realised upwards of 400,000 fr. Rouvière acted the part of Hamlet, first at the Théâtre Historique, and afterwards at the Odéon, for twenty years.

'Hamlet and Rouvière,' says Dumas, '*pendant vingt ans, ne firent qu'un.*'[1]

The version of Dumas by no means stands alone; various translators and adapters were at work in the same field, before as well as after him. As early as the year 1829, a metrical version of 'Hamlet,' by Léon de Wailly, was played at the Odéon, but being solely intended for the stage, it has, as far as we know, never appeared in print, so that we are unable to give an account of its merits or demerits. However, no very favourable idea will be formed of it, if it is borne in mind that the adapter, according to M. de Chatelain's statement, translated Burns *into prose*. 'Le burlesque,' adds M. de Chatelain, 'ne peut aller plus loin.' 'Hamlet' was even turned into an opera for the French stage, of which unfortunately no particulars can be gathered.[2] Another prose translation, with the original on the opposite page, appeared in the 'Chefs d'Oeuvre de Shakespeare,' published in 1837, by D. O'Sullivan,

[1] See 'Étude sur Hamlet et sur W. Shakespeare,' par Alex. Dumas, Paris, Michel Levy, 1867. Rouvière (who died at Paris in 1865) originally studied for the law and then for some time tried his hand at painting, till he finally devoted himself to dramatic art. According to a German criticism ('Auf dem Vulkan, Pariser Schilderungen von Sigmund Kolisch,' Stuttgart, 1868, 200–207) he did not succeed in entering into the spirit of Shakespeare, and in breaking through the barriers which separate the French mode of feeling and thought from his poetry. 'Othello,' whom he likewise played at the Théâtre Historique, in his hands was nothing but a distortion, so that the play after a few representations had to be withdrawn. In the winter of 1867 Dumas' translation of 'Hamlet' was revived at the Gaîté Théâtre, where an actress, Madame Judith, played the part of 'Hamlet,' but was received with decided disapprobation (1874).

[2] Lacroix, 337. The reader will remember that this was written before Messrs. Michel Carré, Jules Barbier, and Ambroise Thomas had familiarised the public to such tasteless absurdity (1874).

which formed part of the 'Bibliothèque Anglo-Française, ou Collection des Poêtes Anglais les plus estimés,' etc. The various plays in this collection were translated by different hands; the translator of 'Hamlet' was Ernest Fouinet, and short introductions and explanatory notes, of little value, were added by the editor. It is only worthy of remark that the latter considers the speeches which Marcellus and Horatio address to the Ghost, and the description of purgatory, so much in accordance with the spirit of the Catholic Church, that he finds himself inclined to agree with those commentators who have maintained that Shakespeare was a member of that Church. The name O'Sullivan is sufficiently indicative of the quarter where his belief may have originated; he moreover knew very well that in this respect he could calculate upon the approval and the sympathy of a large portion of the French nation. 'Les sentimens religieux, prêtés à Shakespeare,' he says on p. 232, 'ne seraient qu'un titre de plus à notre admiration pour cet étonnant génie.' The translation of Davésiès de Pons, which appeared two years after O'Sullivan's, has been beyond our reach. Two other prose translations of all Shakespeare's works, by Benjamin Laroche and Francisque Michel, both published in 1842, are mentioned by Lacroix. In the translation by François Victor Hugo (likewise in prose), 'Hamlet' again plays a prominent part, inasmuch as it is placed at the head of the work, and even a translation of the quarto of 1603 is added. It is known that Victor Hugo furnished some comments to his son's work, a circumstance to which he calls attention with the words, that this translation

'offrira au lecteur cette nouveauté dernière: l'auteur de Ruy Blas commentant l'auteur d'Hamlet.' This flourish of trumpets is re-echoed by a passage in Victor Hugo's work on Shakespeare, where he declares his son's undertaking to be the most menacing danger to the existing Government of France, and sarcastically calls upon it to be on its guard against this 'unmuzzled' Shakespeare. The introduction given by this dangerous translator to his 'Hamlet' is in the highest degree in the character of a *feuilleton*, and concludes with the following tirade to the young men of France, the translator's schoolfellows:—'Restez à jamais fidèles à la sainte cause du progrès. Soyez fermes, intrépides et magnanimes. . . . Regardez bien, et par cette froide nuit d'hiver, à la pâle clarté du ciel étoilé: vous verrez passer—armé de pied à cap, le bâton de commandement à la main—ce spectre en cheveux blancs, qui s'appelle *le devoir*.'

We must speak at somewhat greater length of the most recent translation by the Chevalier de Chatelain,[1] a prolific translator of English poetry. M. de Chatelain may be considered a representative of the latest Epigoni of the French romanticists; Charles Bandelaire, Lecomte de Lille, Théodore de Banville, Théophile Gauthier, and Roger de Beauvoir being those contemporaneous poets with whom he wishes to be classed.[2] His work is ushered in by a poem written by Théodore de Banville, which is indeed a *non plus ultra* of bombast. These are the concluding lines:—

[1] The title of this translation has already been given in full, on p. 234, note.

[2] Introd. p. xvi.

Toute création à laquelle on aspire,
Tout rêve, toute chose émane de Shakespeare.
Shakespeare! . . . ce penseur! Ombre! Océan! Eclair!
Abîme comme Goethe! âme comme Schiller!
Lyre dont chaque note a des manteaux de flamme!
Œil ouvert gravement sur la nature et l'âme!
Phare que, pour guider ses pâles matelots,
L'Art a fait rayonner sur les alpes des flots!

M. de Chatelain is persuaded that Shakespeare cannot be adapted to the rules of French poetry, as Ducis wished to do, but that on the contrary the latter have to adapt themselves to him. He vehemently inveighs against all the changes made in Shakespeare by his predecessors, and sets himself the task of introducing his countrymen to the genuine unadulterated Shakespeare. But how has he accomplished this task? Instead of following some good edition, he has based his translation upon the stage arrangement used at the Princess' Theatre, and defines his work as a facsimile of this acting edition! His reason for pursuing such a course does not appear; as far as we know he has not succeeded in introducing his translation to the French stage by this means, if this should have been his leading motive. It is self-evident that his original was not without important omissions; Fortinbras, Norway, and the Polish war are again wanting; the beautiful description of the Christmas nights (I. 1), is wanting; the commencement of the second act, the conclusion of the third act, and the second scene of the fifth act (between Hamlet and Horatio), are wanting; Reynaldo is struck out; Hamlet does not appear during the King's prayer, &c. If the translator knew the real Shakespeare, it is inconceivable how in spite of his good resolutions he could adopt such deeply incisive

omissions. Exactly as in the case of his predecessors whom he has so sharply censured, these omissions are counterbalanced by abundant additions, which cannot be set down to the account of the acting edition. As the translator has in so far kept strictly to the original, that he has translated verse into verse and prose into prose, he has of course met with great difficulties in the metrical parts, and has been obliged to employ numerous patch words, nay even patch lines, to pad his Alexandrines. Even those beautiful lines and images which have become household words and will scarcely bear the alteration of a letter, have frequently fallen victims to such make-shifts. Thus for instance we read :—

> Hélas ! Fragilité, c'est vrai, ton nom est femme !
>
> Dans l'œil de mon esprit, Horace, et dans mon cœur.
>
> Oh ! oui, c'était un homme à tout prendre, au total,
> Dont je ne verrai point le pareil ou l'égal.
>
> N'emprunte pas d'argent ; emprunter est folie,
> C'est du vin de la vie aller boire à la lie.
>
> C'est vrai, le froid est âpre, et nous démoralise.
>
> —Un rat !—un rat m'excède.

Although we must allow the translator mitigating circumstances on account of verse and rhyme, yet this does not apply to the prose passages where the same impropriety recurs nevertheless. Thus Hamlet's love-letter ends with the words : 'Tant que cette machine qui se meut, agit et pense appartiendra à Hamlet.' In his speech to the actors, a Latin line is inserted : 'c'était le récit d'Enée à Didon, une sorte d'Infandum, regina, jubes renovare dolorem.' Is such patchwork to be called a facsimile ? Or supposing for a moment the

acting edition should contain this addition, how could an intelligent translator have followed it?

Like all the members of the above-mentioned group of poets, M. de Chatelain is fond of archaisms, which he especially draws from Montaigne and Rabelais. He affirms that neither Shakespeare nor Chaucer (for he has also tried his hand at him), nor any other early poet, could be translated without archaisms, whatever the 'Académie dite Française' may say. The 'Monsieur' which Dumas so frequently employs in his 'Hamlet,' puts him in a mild rage. He sticks to the 'Messire,' which possesses a certain glory in his eyes. He also likes to omit the personal pronoun before the verb, which however is as often a matter of necessity as of choice, owing to the constraint imposed upon him by his verse. By the side of his archaisms he employs a large number of the most modern colloquial phrases. Archaisms and neologisms are certainly the two means by which the Romantic school has endeavoured to free the French language from the yoke of the Academy, and has greatly enriched it and given it a freer movement, so that it less and less deserves the epithet of a 'proud beggar' bestowed upon it by Voltaire. Everything depends upon the discernment and taste with which these means are applied, and M. de Chatelain appears deficient in both; his language is a wonderfully mixed company, in which the colloquial phrases so liberally admitted into tragic lines have a very perplexing look. Even the *cholera morbus* is introduced (p. 11), and Ophelia is characterised by her father (p. 39), as 'un vrai morceau de roi'—why not rather at once, 'une pièce de résistance?' But it will be best to pre-

sent the reader—now for the last time—with the monologue, by way of example and comparison:—

Telle est la question : Être ou bien ne pas être :—
À savoir, si l'esprit de lui-même est plus maître,
En supportant les coups, les flêches du destin,
Plutôt qu'en se cabrant sur des soucis sans fin,
S'anéantir ? Mourir—dormir—pas davantage ;
Dire qu'en s'endormant soudain on met l'ancrage
Sur les peines du cœur, sur les maux, les ennuis
Dont l'humaine nature est l'insondable puits,
C'est là la fin des fins, oui dà ! la fin dernière,
Que l'on doit désirer de façon singulière.
Mourir—dormir—dormir—peut-être pour rêver,
Oui dà, voilà le *hic* ; il le faut observer :
Dans ce sommeil de mort quand d'humeur misanthrope
Nous aurons rejeté notre frêle enveloppe,
Quels rêves surgiront ? . . . Cela donne à penser,
Et le pour et le contre il nous le faut peser.
Car quel est celui-là qui serait assez bête
Pour supporter du sort l'incessante tempête,
Les torts de l'oppresseur, de l'orgueilleux le 'Moi' !
Les peines de l'amour, les délais de la loi,
Des employés hargneux le dédain, l'insolence
Qu' endure le mérite aux mains de l'ignorance,
Quand avec un poignard il pourrait mordicus !
S'exempter de l'impôt, et gagner son quitus ? [1]
Quel est-il celui-là qui sans fin et sans cesse
Porterait des fardeaux jusques à la vieillesse,
Pour grogner et suer, maugréant sur son sort,
Si n'était la terreur de ce qui suit la mort :
La mort, pays lointain, qui se perd dans les brumes
De la pensée humaine, et dans ses amertumes,
Pays inexploré dont jamais voyageur,
N'est encor revenu, jette le froid au cœur,

---

[1] 'Nous avons une explication à donner à propos de ce mot de *quitus*—corruption du Latin *quietus*. Nous dirons donc à nos lecteurs, ce qu'ils croiront sans peine, que nous avons été—jeune !—et c'est très vrai, à preuve qu' aujourd'hui nous sommes vieux ! Or, dans notre verte jeunesse étant clerc de notaire, nous avons poursuivi l'obtention pour de vieux comptables, de certificats de *quitus*—certificats qui les exonéraient de toutes reclamations sur les faits et gestes de leur précédente administration. C'est dans ce sens que nous employons ce mot.'—Note du Traducteur.

Et nous fait supporter nos maux et nos misères
De l'inconnu plutôt qu' aller sonder les sphères.
La conscience ainsi fait de nous des poltrons ;
La résolution chez les plus fanfarons,
Forte en couleur d'abord, et blêmit et se fane,
Au penser de la mort, à son sublime arcane ;
Et des projets ainsi grands de dimensions,
A l'état de projets meurent—sans actions.
Mais doucement, voici la charmante Ophélie . . .
Nymphe, en tes oraisons pense à moi, ne m'oublie !

If now, after finishing this critical review of the French translations of 'Hamlet,' we enquire into its result, it appears that the French cannot yet boast of a standard, faithful, and at the same time poetical translation of this tragedy (the one they have most frequently translated), much less a translation of the whole of Shakespeare that can be compared to the German translation by Schlegel and Tieck and half-a-dozen other German translations : nay, such a translation is probably beyond their reach. Only a few of Shakespeare's tragedies have as yet been translated into French metre ; of his histories and comedies, as far as we know, the French possess as yet no metrical translations at all. The Alexandrine, with its epigrammatically pointed couplets, and with its rhymes alternating according to a strict rule, is of a character so essentially different, and even in its modern and freer treatment so unsuited for the rendering of blank verse, that, as we have seen, the most eminent French translators of Shakespeare have hitherto preferred prose. If the translation is to be made line for line, the greater compass of the Alexandrine renders patch words and makeshifts unavoidable, whereas in the other case, numerous unstopped lines will arise, and injure the natural flow

of the language. Attempts in French blank verse have been made, it is true, for instance in Sabatier's translation of Schiller's 'Tell,' but such verse are above all incompatible with the fact that the French language does not measure a verse by quantity or accent, but only counts the syllables, and that French blank verse therefore lacks every metrical characteristic.[1] It may however be doubted whether these attempts are to be considered as final and as settling the question, or whether it would not be worth the trouble to make fresh endeavours to bend the language to blank verse. Such a revolution would perhaps not be greater than the overthrow of the dramatic unities accomplished by the Romanticists, and poetic translation is the very field in which innovations of this kind use to be effected; just as the improvement and perfection of the German hexameter is mainly due to Voss' translation of Homer, so French blank verse might be most appropriately attempted by a translation of Shakespeare.

However, apart from this problem, which may be reserved for the future, the French, even within the actually existing limits, have not yet succeeded in producing a classic translation of Shakespeare, inasmuch as we cannot concede this rank to a prose translation. The main causes of this seem to lie on the one hand in the fact that the French have not yet made Shakespeare a subject of philological study, and on the other that they do not possess a philosophical system of aesthetics. Nevertheless, the important advances which they have

[1] As early as 1573, Baif, in his translation of Sophocles' Antigone, tried his hand at French blank verse. The title of Sabatier's translation is: Wilhelm Tell, Poëme Dramatique, par Schiller, traduit dans le mètre de l'Original par François Sabatier-Ungher. Königsberg, 1859.

made in both directions since Voltaire must not be overlooked. The latest French students of Shakespeare, Philarète Chasles and Alfred Mezières—like the triumvirate of the Sorbonne—have enabled themselves to their task by a vigorous study of German literature. Mezières, it is true, opposes the German ideological interpretation of Shakespeare, but in spite of this opposition the German influence upon him is unmistakable. In his analysis of 'Hamlet'[1] he is, however, behind Barante; he does not point out the artistic plan, the fundamental idea, and the unity of the play, he only analyses the character of the hero to the exclusion of all the rest. In his opinion Shakespeare's characters are not exclusively drawn from the point of view of the dramatic action, but have an independent existence and live outside of the stage. By no character, he says, this is proved better than by the Prince of Denmark; events were not required to drive him to meditation and to suffering, for even before he knows of the murder of his father, he completely characterises himself in the monologue,

Oh that this too, too solid flesh would melt.

Mezières then compares Hamlet with Goethe's Werther, and expresses a belief that the Germans like this comparison. In some points he approaches the views of Gervinus, whom he combats in others; he acknowledges in particular that Hamlet represents the German national mind, and that Freiligrath was right in exclaiming 'Germany is Hamlet!' He then turns to the question as to whether Hamlet is Shakespeare's fa-

[1] Shakespeare, ses Œuvres et ses Critiques (Paris, 1860), 316–332.

vourite character, his own mental image or ideal, a question which he says has been much discussed since the appearance of 'Wilhelm Meister.' In answering the question he distinguishes two sides in Hamlet, the one which is in perfect harmony with the poet—the philosophical and artistic side—the other which corresponds to the situation arising out of the struggle of the character with its destiny. He accuses the Germans of having overlooked this distinction, and of having absolutely maintained Hamlet to be the faithful picture of the poet, or the ideal which he holds up to his readers. It is however just one of Mezières' own countrymen, the latest historian of English literature, H. Taine, who identifies Shakespeare with Hamlet, whereas the Germans, agreeing with Gervinus, find the greatest affinity between Henry V. and the poet. Mezières is not unaware of this, but he thinks that these two characters correspond to different periods of the poet's life; that Henry V. is the expression of his youthful period, and Hamlet that of his maturer manhood. He is silent about the contrast in the characters of Hamlet and Laertes, although he must have known of it from Gervinus. That Hamlet should perish with the guilty—he is himself guilty in many ways—Mezières thinks the only suitable solution, as in his opinion, even if he had survived both his uncle and his mother, he must in the end have destroyed himself. Lastly, Mezières finds that the views and principles of life set forth in 'Hamlet' are continued and further developed in 'Timon of Athens,' the discussion of which play he accordingly connects directly with that of 'Hamlet.'

If, after what has been said, our starting point, that Shakespeare has always been regarded in France pre-eminently as the poet of 'Hamlet,' should require any further corroboration, we should find it in abundance in Victor Hugo's work on Shakespeare (1864). As is well known, this book treats of all possible subjects, and by the way also, of Shakespeare. It is in the main an apotheosis of genius, and a characterisation of the greatest literary geniuses, where we may constantly read between the lines the author's self-idolising persuasion that he too belongs to the ranks of these 'demi-gods.' As, according to his expression, the highest art is the region of equals, Victor Hugo is Shakespeare's equal—which was to be proved. The author therefore does his utmost to write like a genius; one grand thought follows the other in rapid succession. The sober-minded reader may certainly find most of them wrong or hollow, but what of that, if they do but dazzle. We do not mean to deny that there are genuine pearls among them, but the great majority are made of glass or wax—'words, words, words,' to speak with Hamlet. In the introduction the well-known biographical dates are given, interwoven with such silly stories as the holding of horses at the playhouse door, which have long since been set aside. Of Shakespeare's works 'Hamlet' is the only one discussed in detail, the three grand tragedies, 'Macbeth,' 'Othello,' and 'King Lear,' which are classed with it, being settled by a few high-flown phrases. That nothing is said about the comedies might be pardoned, but that the creator of the historical drama in France should have passed over

Shakespeare's histories in silence is most surprising.[1] As we said before, Shakespeare is and remains the poet of 'Hamlet.' '"Hamlet," the tragedy of doubt,' says V. Hugo, 'stands in the centre of all his works.' 'Geniuses of the first rank,' he continues, 'have the peculiarity that each creates a specimen of humanity.' We non-geniuses have hitherto been indulging in the opposite belief, that the characteristic sign of genius, and of Shakespeare in particular, is that it creates many individuals. 'Each,' says Victor Hugo, 'gives to humanity its own image, one a laughing one, another a weeping, another again a thoughtful one. The last is the grandest. Plautus laughs and gives mankind an Amphitruo, Rabelais laughs and gives a Gargantua, Cervantes laughs and gives a Don Quixote, Beaumarchais laughs and gives a Figaro; Molière weeps and gives an Alceste, Shakespeare meditates and gives a Hamlet, Æschylos meditates and gives a Prometheus. The former are great, Æschylos and Shakespeare are immeasurably so.' These types of humanity are, according to the author, so many Adams; 'Homer's man Achilles is in this way an Adam, and the progenitor of manslayers; Æschylos' man Prometheus is an Adam, and the father of wrestlers and warriors; Shakespeare's man Hamlet is an Adam, and the progenitor of the race of dreamers.' Then follows a detailed comparison, not between Orestes and Hamlet, which 'are so clearly one and the same drama that it

[1] During the whole of the 18th century, both Shakespeare's histories and comedies were ignored by French criticism; only the Romantic school took notice of them. The first comedy altered for the French was 'Comme il vous plaira,' by G. Sand. See Lacroix, 343 seqq.

is difficult to find anything more thoroughly identical,' but between Hamlet and Prometheus, which are 'superhuman creations.' 'Prometheus is action, Hamlet hesitation. In the case of Prometheus the obstacle is external, in Hamlet it is internal. Prometheus can rise if he raises a mountain with him, Hamlet can only do so if he raises his thoughts with him. If Prometheus tears the vulture from his breast, all is done; Hamlet, on the other hand, has to tear Hamlet out of himself. Prometheus and Hamlet are two livers laid bare before us; blood flows from the one, doubt from the other. . . . Hamlet is a prince and a demagogue, acute and extravagant, brooding and foolish, a man and a neuter. He has little belief in the sceptre, scoffs at the throne, associates with students, converses with the first one he meets, understands the people, despises the multitude, hates strength, distrusts success, questions the unknown, and is upon familiar terms with the unseen world. He infects others with the diseases which he has not himself got; his feigned madness causes his beloved to go actually mad. He is familiar with ghosts and comedians. He jokes with the axe of Orestes in his hand. He speaks about literature, recites poetry, composes a dramatic critique, plays with the bones of the dead in the churchyard, abashes his mother, avenges his father, and concludes the terrible drama of life and death with a gigantic sign of interrogation. Nothing more appalling has ever been conceived. It is the matricide who asks himself, What do I know? Matricide! Let us pause at this word. Is Hamlet a matricide? Yes, and no. He only threatens his mother, but the threat is so horrible that his mother

is terrified. "These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears. What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me? Help, help!" And when she is dying, Hamlet, without pitying her, addresses himself to Claudius with the tragic words, "Follow my mother." Hamlet is — what is most terrible—a possible matricide. Were southern blood in his veins, as in the case of Orestes, instead of northern thoughts in his head, he would in fact murder his mother.'

'This drama is severe. Truth doubts and honesty lies. Nothing is more comprehensive, nothing more subtle. Man is here the world, and the world null. Hamlet even in the fulness of life does not know whether he exists. In this tragedy, which is at the same time a philosophy, everything swims, hesitates, vacillates, dissolves and scatters itself; thought is a cloud, will is fog, decision twilight, action at every moment changes into its opposite; the compass governs men; it is a work producing disquietude and giddiness, one in which everything is transparent, where the thought has no other scope than from the murdered King to the buried Yorick, and where the most real object, royalty, appears in the form of a ghost, and cheerfulness in the form of a death's-head. "Hamlet" is the masterpiece of dream- and thought tragedy.'

But enough of this confused bombast. It is unquestionably a worthy pendant to the well-known account given by Voltaire of the contents of 'Hamlet.' It is, as it were, the last milestone reached by 'Hamlet' in its migration through French literature, which it began with Voltaire. Voltaire, the representative of the French mind in the eighteenth century, threw dirt

upon Shakespeare; Victor Hugo, a representative of the French mind of the nineteenth century, idolises him—both in an equally senseless manner. The migration, however, has not yet come to an end, but is vigorously proceeding. A characteristic sign of the present time—a *signatura temporis*—is the mutual interpenetration, so to speak, of the mental work of nations, between whom the mediaeval walls of partition are becoming more and more demolished. Through 'Hamlet' the Germanic mind has penetrated into French literature, which has already begun to modify its character. The influence is, however, a mutual one; the Germanic mind is already no longer like Hamlet, any more than the French mind is its opposite. In the same way as Hamlet is an eminently northern type, Don Juan is an eminently southern one, although it has received its perfection and immortality through German music; and to have naturalised Don Juan in English poetry is by no means Byron's smallest feat. In this way of mutual intermixing the French learn how to think like Germans, and the Germans how to enjoy themselves and to act like the Romance nations. May the mixture ever be a prosperous one, and may it result in genuine Corinthian metal.

(1874.)

The fulfilment of this hope, expressed in 1865, has vanished to an incalculable distance by the great events of the last few years. It has become more evident than ever that a deep, never-to-be-spanned chasm separates not only the French mode of thought and feeling from the German, but the national mind and

character of the Romance nations in general from the Germanic. In spite of all its progress, which after all has been more seeming than actual, the French mind still maintains a repelling attitude to everything Germanic, the poetry of Shakespeare included. Those French critics who show the great poet at least some respectful sympathy, still are 'rari nantes in gurgite vasto.' This, to keep to our subject, has only recently been proved in regard to 'Hamlet.' In the summer of 1873 an English company, undeterred by former failures, again undertook to bring 'Hamlet' before the Parisians (in the small theatre de l'Athenée). The attempt was, however, as little successful as previous ones. Shakespeare's grandest tragedy attracted but a thin audience, and although a critic in the 'Journal des Débats,' August 14, 1873, reported favourably of the play, as well as the actors, yet the general feeling seems to have been one of ridicule and rejection.[1] 'Othello,' according to the same friendly critic, obtained a somewhat larger share of success; still it was not what could be expected, and the undertaking, after a few representations, had to be abandoned. Deficient knowledge of the English language, which no Frenchman ever acquires perfectly, may certainly be pleaded as an extenuating circumstance; it can however not be denied that the French have as great an antipathy to the English language as to Shakespeare's poetry; they are devoid of the faculty of understanding either, nor do they wish to acquire such a faculty, and 'Hamlet,' above all others, will remain incomprehensible and repulsive to them as long as they are Frenchmen.

[1] See The Athenæum, 1873, ii. 283.

THE SUPPOSED TRAVELS OF SHAKESPEARE.

(1873.)

URGED by the desire to clear away the obscurity which rests on the time intervening between Shakespeare's flight from Stratford and the year 1592, when he is first mentioned in London (in Greene's 'Groat's-worth of Wit'),[1] some Shakespearean scholars have had recourse to the supposition that Shakespeare did not, on leaving his home, go to London, but that he went abroad. This, they think, would have been the only means by which he could have escaped the persecution of Sir Thomas Lucy, while at the same time by joining the so-called English comedians who travelled in Holland and Germany, he was likely to have made a tolerably large sum of money, which might have formed the foundation of his subsequent prosperity, which is so difficult to be accounted for. Mr. John Bruce,[2] to whom we are indebted for an ingenious exposition of this hypothesis, starts from the fact that in September, 1585, Leicester was appointed Commander-in-chief in the Netherlands. In accordance with his ambition and

[1] The document published by Mr. Collier, according to which Shakespeare was a member of Leicester's company and a shareholder of the Blackfriars Theatre as early as 1589, has been declared to be a forgery by the most competent palaeographers.

[2] John Bruce, 'Who was "Will," my Lord of Leicester's jesting player?' in the 'Shakespeare Society's Papers,' i. 88-95 (1844).

love of splendour, the Earl regarded this appointment as an inducement to display his rank and influence in all its fulness. He summoned all his friends, protégés, and subordinates to enter his service, and collected a suite of no less than five hundred persons, the greater part of whom were at all events raised on his estates in Warwickshire. Among them was one John Arden, recommended by Thomas Dudley, one Thomas Ardern, who performed the duties of a 'clerk comptroller,' and one Miles Combes. The first two may perhaps be regarded as relations of Shakespeare on his mother's side, whereas the third was probably a member of that Stratford family well known for its neighbourly friendship with the poet. Under these circumstances Mr. Bruce considers it not improbable that Shakespeare himself on this occasion may have entered the service of the powerful Earl, and have followed him to Holland in the capacity of an actor, for, as is evident from reliable indications, Leicester was also accompanied by his company of players. Shakespeare in that case must have left Stratford in the winter of 1585, which although in our opinion rather late, might easily be believed; for Leicester sailed from Harwich on the 4th of December of that year, landed at Flushing on the 10th, and returned on the 3rd of December of the year following.[1] Among his company was a 'jesting player' called Will, who played a prominent part, more so indeed off the stage than on it, for he was sent home with confidential letters from (or to ?) his master. This is evident from a letter of Sir Philip Sidney to his

[1] Compare William J. Thoms, Three Notelets on Shakespeare, London, 1865, p. 117 seqq.

father-in-law Sir Francis Walsingham, dated from Utrecht, March 24th, 1586.[1] The passage referred to runs as follows: 'I wrote to yow a letter by Will, my Lord of Lester's jesting plaier, enclosed in a letter to my wife, and I never had answer thereof. Hit contained somthing to my Lord of Lester and council, that some wai might be taken to stay my ladi there. I since dyvers tymes have writt to know whether yow had receaved them, but you never answered me that point. I since find that the knave deliverd the letters to my ladi of Lester, but whether she sent them yow or no I know not, but earnestly desire to do, because I dout there is more enterpreted thereof.' Mr. Bruce does not think the expressions 'jesting player' and 'knave' applicable to Shakespeare, but inclines to the belief that they refer to the well-known comedian Will Kempe, whom he imagines to have belonged to the Earl's company, together with our poet. Mr. Thoms, on the contrary, in the passage quoted, sees in these expressions no objection to identify the person in question with Shakespeare, and the late Dr. William Bell was of the same opinion.[2] The word 'knave,' Mr. Thoms observes, had in those days by no means the objectionable meaning which now attaches to it, a fact which Mr. Bruce himself admits. In proof of this two passages are cited, from 'Julius Cæsar,' IV. 3: 'Gentle knave, good night,' and from 'Antony and Cleopatra,' IV. 12: 'My good knave, Eros,' to which a third might have been added from 'King Lear,' I. 4:

[1] In the 'Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney' and in 'Lodge's Portraits.'

[2] Shakespeare's Puck, ii. 227–344.

'My friendly knave, I thank thee.' Shakespeare, at that time, had done little or nothing to deserve any special respect, and on this head, therefore, no exception need be taken against Mr. Bruce's conjecture, but the 'jesting player' seems to be an almost insurmountable obstacle, for, so far as our knowledge of Shakespeare's theatrical performances extends, he never acted comic parts. It is true that the poet might have belonged to the company in some other capacity, which would indeed go far to explain how it was that he should have so rapidly risen to distinction in his profession, were it not that other circumstances seem irreconcilable to such an hypothesis. Leicester, although a great patron and promoter of the stage (he had obtained in 1574 the first royal patent for his company of players), yet nowhere appears as a personal patron of Shakespeare. If the latter had been in Leicester's service, why did he not dedicate to him his 'Venus and Adonis,' and his 'Lucretia,' which poems might thus have been brought before the public some years earlier?' Moreover, Shakespeare was certainly aware that his relative Edward Arden had been executed at Leicester's instigation in 1583; could he after this have consented to enter his service? The two Ardens did indeed do so, and in spite of the execution the connection of Leicester with the widely extended and influential Arden family seems not to have been completely broken off. But was Shakespeare at all the man to enter the personal service of a nobleman, especially after the experience he had just made with Sir Thomas Lucy? Be that as it may, this at least is said to be settled by a recent discovery of Mr. Halli-

well, that Shakespeare was not the 'jesting player, Will,' as from Leicester's Household Book, preserved in the Longbridge Collection in Warwickshire, it is proved with certainty that this designation was meant for William Kempe.[1]

Mr. Thoms goes a step further; he not only supposes the poet to have belonged to Leicester's company, but he makes him a soldier to boot. This supposition would in so far have nothing surprising in it, as Shakespeare would by no means have been the only poet who engaged in military service in Holland; he would in this case have been the comrade of Ben Jonson, Gascoigne, Whetstone, Rich, Donne, and others. But whereas the military life of these poets is either expressly attested, or at least raised to a high degree of probability, Mr. Thoms, in regard to Shakespeare, cannot bring forward any other arguments than his knowledge of military affairs, which he says is indicated by numerous passages in his works. These passages are, however, too much of a general nature to prove anything; they betray no greater acquaintance with the military profession than in fact every poet possesses, and cannot in the least be compared with those legalisms, as Lord Campbell calls them, from which it is inferred that Shakespeare had tried the profession of the law. When, for instance, in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' III. 1, Biron expresses a wish to be 'a Corporal of the Field' of Cupid, Mr. Thoms regards this as 'a direct professional allusion!' To the same effect he quotes the words of Friar Laurence in 'Romeo and Juliet,' III. 3: 'Like powder in a skill-less soldier's flask,' &c.; the

[1] The Athenæum, 1871, i. 623.

expressions of Benedick in 'Much Ado about Nothing,' 'or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf;' 'I give thee the bucklers;' 'You must put in the pikes with a vice;' and similar passages. If such phrases would prove anything, we should have to infer from 'Wallenstein's Lager,' that Schiller had been a soldier of twenty years' standing, and must at least have risen to the rank of a major. Mr. Thoms, moreover, leaves it unexplained why Shakespeare, if he had indeed belonged to Leicester's servants, and not been driven by absolute necessity, should have enlisted as a soldier. Was it from pure love of action, not to say overflow of animal spirits? For military service in the Netherlands, to English volunteers at least, was anything but a profitable business; B. Jonson returned as poor as he went, and at a later period, in Davenant's comedy, 'The Wits,' there appear two soldiers, Meager and Pert, who return half-starved from Holland.

Dr. William Bell's continuation of the hypothesis would be particularly attractive to a German critic, were it not that it stood upon too weak legs, we might almost say upon no legs at all. When Leicester's company, towards the close of the year 1586, returned to England with their master, Shakespeare, as Dr. Bell thinks, either got leave of absence or his dismissal, and from Holland proceeded to Germany, where he joined some company of English comedians. Through Mr. A. Cohn's exhaustive work, which Dr. Bell did not live to profit by, we have become acquainted with the life and doings of these English comedians in Germany, and a lively picture of international intercourse has been revealed to us, of which formerly only scat-

tered and indistinct fragments were known. Holland, Denmark, and particularly Germany, swarmed with English actors, musicians, dancers, and other performers, and it cannot be doubted that even members of the circle in which Shakespeare moved, travelled and performed for some time on the Continent. Such were doubtless the two actors Pope and Bryan,[1] who returned from Germany in 1587; William Kempe, who soon after 1600 seems to have played and danced before the Emperor, and the distinguished musician Dowland, who may perhaps also be reckoned among Shakespeare's acquaintance, although the eighth sonnet of the 'Passionate Pilgrim,' which contains a eulogy upon him, was in all probability not written by Shakespeare, but by Richard Barnefield. From this point of view we should consequently have little hesitation in believing that young Shakespeare might have tried his fortune in Germany as well as so many of his fellows; we surely may take it for granted that, like all young men, he had a desire to see foreign lands. And as English comedians in Germany, in contrast to English soldiers in Holland, returned home by no means half-starved and in rags, but with well-stocked purses and rich in honours, Shakespeare might very well have laid the foundation of his wealth in Germany. Dr. Bell is so enamoured of this conjecture that he endeavours to support it by all conceivable arguments, even such as are incredible, if not impossible; he goes so far as to believe that Shakespeare was personally acquainted with Hans Sachs and Ayrer, and that he acted in their plays! According to him it was not Ayrer who borrowed from

[1] A. Cohn, Shakespeare in Germany, p. lxxvi.

Shakespeare, but on the contrary, Shakespeare borrowed from Ayrer.[1] Even if the very vague and incomplete statements in regard to Ayrer's life and works could possibly be reconciled to such a supposition, yet the internal improbability is decidedly against it. This, however, is a question by itself, and would not affect the possibility of Shakespeare having travelled in Germany. However, nowhere in Shakespeare's works do there exist any indications of a familiarity with Germany and its inhabitants, or with the German language and manners. The few allusions 'to German clocks,' 'Love's Labour's Lost,' III. 1; 'the German hunting in water-work,' '2 Henry IV.,' II. 1; 'a full-acorned German boar,' 'Cymbeline,' II. 5; 'round hose in Germany,' 'Merchant of Venice,' I. 2; the historical dates in 'Henry V.,' I. 2; 'crants' and 'upspring' in 'Hamlet,' &c., can, without the slightest difficulty, be explained in a less bold way; German watches, for instance, which B. Jonson also mentions in his 'Epicœne, or the Silent Woman,' were at all events introduced into London from Nürnberg or the Black Forest, and the poet unquestionably witnessed the 'upspring' in the Steelyard, and saw the 'virgin crants' at some German funeral which took place in London.[2] There was in London a German population, not inconsiderable in number and position, with whom Shakespeare, in the simplest and most natural manner, may have come into contact, nay, must have come into contact, and from whom he obtained a knowledge of these things.

[1] A. Cohn, Shakespeare in Germany, lxxi. Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, vii. 360 and 362.

[2] See my edition of 'Chapman's Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany' (Leipzig, 1867), p. 19; 143 seq.

The conjectures about Shakespeare's travels take the poet even beyond Germany to Italy, and it is in fact only there that they reach their actual goal. Distinguished Shakespearean scholars have expressed their conviction that Shakespeare visited Upper Italy, especially Venice, and that within and without his works there are numerous weighty intimations calculated to awaken and support the belief in such a journey; nay, that if any supposed journey of Shakespeare can be made probable, it is above all the journey to Italy. Mr. Ch. A. Brown,[1] though he has most fully entered into the subject, has yet by no means exhausted it, as he has not been aware of a number of arguments which seem even stronger than his own, and however airy this chapter of Shakespearean biography may be, yet it involves such important and interesting questions, that a new investigation seems justified, even if severe critics should give a Not proven, or *Non liquet* as their verdict.

Mr. Ch. A. Brown frankly admits that nothing can shake his faith in Shakespeare's travels in Italy, which, he adds, not only extended to Verona and Venice, but also to Padua, Bologna, Florence, and Pisa, probably even as far as Rome. That this his favourite hypothesis is partially based on those documents, published by Mr. Collier, which have since been declared to be spurious, does not injure the argumentation, and we may drop this point. Mr. Brown finds the strongest proofs in the 'Taming of the Shrew,' which he thinks was composed after the poet's return, but which he fixes at too late a date, as he assigns the journey itself to the

[1] Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems, 100–118.

year 1597. The names of the characters of this comedy, says Mr. Brown, are chosen with a perfect knowledge of the Italian language, especially that of Biondello for the fair-haired youth; Curtis, in his opinion, was either the name of the actor or a corruption of Cortese, as Escalus is of Della Scala. The introduction, where Padua is called the 'nursery of arts,' and Lombardy 'the pleasant garden of great Italy,' according to him is so true to nature that it might have been penned by an Italian.[1] He considers it still more remarkable that Pisa is characterised by the words 'renowned for grave citizens,' for 'gravity' he affirms to be the characteristic feature of the Pisans, in their demeanour, their history, and their literary productions. The manner in which Petrucchio is betrothed to Katherine by her father uniting their hands before two witnesses is set down by him as an essentially Italian custom. In regard to the household furniture and the objects of luxury with which old Gremio's house is furnished, it has been remarked before by Lady Morgan, that all the articles mentioned have been actually seen by her in the palaces of Venice, Genoa, and Florence; Mr. Brown confirms her statement, and contradicts her only in so far as he will not allow this to be 'the knowledge of genius.' 'The Merchant of Venice' in his eyes, is 'a merchant of no other place in the world'; everything in it is thoroughly Italian. Even in the circumstance of old Gobbo's presenting a dish of doves to his son's master, he sees a characteristic Italian feature. In 'Othello,' Mr. Brown points to the characterisation of the Floren-

[1] In Chettle's 'England's Mourning Garment' (1603), Lombardy is praised as 'the garden of the world' (1874).

tine Cassio, whom Iago derides as a 'great arithmetician' and a 'counter-caster,' and whom he quizzes about his 'debtor and creditor.' Indeed a soldier from Florence, which by its bankers, its introduction of bills of exchange, of book-keeping, &c., had obtained a world-wide reputation, could not be more appropriately ridiculed. Lastly, in regard to the 'Tempest,' Mr. Brown draws attention to the fact that its fable perfectly agrees with well-known historical events. Lodovico Sforza (died about 1509), caused his nephew Giovanni Galeazzo, the rightful heir, to be dragged to Pavia, where he had him killed by slow poison. If, in this respect, he appears as the prototype of Antonio, he on the other hand resembles Prospero in his love for science, learning, and art. Alliances between Milan and Naples were of frequent occurrence, though there was none between Lodovico Sforza and his contemporary, Ferdinand of Naples, the son of Alfonso; yet there is again an agreement in the fact of Ferdinand's son marrying a Milanese princess.

It is a perfectly correct remark of Mr. Brown, that Shakespeare might have learned each single one of these facts in London, but that their totality borders upon the miraculous. The miracle appears the greater the more minutely we examine the matter and endeavour to supply the shortcomings of Mr. Brown.

In the days of Shakespeare Venice, on account of its political position, its commerce, and its excellence in the fine arts, stood at the head, not only of Italy, but of all the Romanic states; it was, even more so than Paris, the seat and centre of fashion and luxury which, not indeed in dress, but in all kinds of little conveni-

ences and refinements, spread thence to England.[1] It was the city of pleasure for all Europe,

> The pleasure place of all festivity,
> The revel of the world, the masque of Italy.

Besides this it was, as it were, the bridge between the west and east, the point of entrance, as well as of exit, for all that went to the east or that came from the east. It was in all departments of practical and ideal life certainly one of the most important and attractive towns of the mediaeval world. England especially must have felt a sympathetic inclination for Venice, for, like her, Venice had achieved greatness as a maritime power, without ever crossing England's interest or exciting her jealousy. As the Republic never came forward as the champion of Catholicism, and did not allow religion to play a part in its politics, no religious hatred could arise between Venice and England, like that between Spain and England. Perhaps also the peculiar mixture of aristocratic rule and popular freedom which distinguished the constitution of Venice may have been congenial to the English. Still more than this the study of and predilection for Italian poetry, which was so widely spread in England, could not but excite the desire of travellers to visit the native country of Petrarch, Boccaccio, Tasso, Ariosto, and Guarini. It is therefore by no means surprising that since Sir Rychard Torking-

[1] Forks and tooth-picks came from Venice. See Notes and Queries, March 26, 1870, p. 322; April 23, 1870, p. 405; June 18, 1870, p. 590. Compare 'Chopine,' Hamlet, II. 2, and 'any tire of Venetian admittance,' Merry Wives, III. 3. According to the direction of Inigo Jones, Falstaff was to be played in a 'little cap alla Venetiane greay.' Collier, 'New Facts,' 39. The expressions, milliner and mantua-maker, prove that English ladies received fashions and materials for dresses from Upper Italy.

ton, who in his 'Pylgrymage to Jerusalem' in 1517, gave an attractive account of Venice, through which he had passed, the number of English travellers to Italy, throughout the 16th century, kept on the increase until, at the end of the century, it reached its culminating point. The great majority of these travellers by no means belonged exclusively to the ranks of the aristocracy of birth and wealth, but included scholars, authors, and actors, as is sufficiently clear from a glance at Shakespeare's contemporaries. This at the same time proves that the journey cannot have been particularly expensive, and therefore did not exceed Shakespeare's means. Travellers, moreover, adapted themselves to circumstances; we know from Coryat that they walked a great deal on foot, and in the inns they lived as economically as possible. 'I'd rather . . . . travel through France and be mine own ostler,' says John Webster, sarcastically, in his 'Vittoria Corombona.'[1] Lord Bacon was not very well off at the time when he resided on the Continent (from 1576–79). The same may be said of Sir Thomas Bodley, who studied at Geneva, and then travelled on the Continent for nearly four years. A third student on the Continent who may be classed with these two, was William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, who went through France and Germany to Padua, where he graduated between the years 1599–1602. Another less renowned Harvey, Gabriel Harvey, the inventor of the English hexameter, as he wished to be styled; the well-known pamphletist, Thomas Nash; Rich, the translator of Italian novels; the dramatists Lilly, Anthony Munday,

[1] Dodsley, 1825, vi. 262.

and Greene; Daniel, Shakespeare's direct predecessor as a writer of sonnets, and others, were all in Italy. Inigo Jones completed his artistic education in Venice.[1] The travels of all these contemporaries of Shakespeare are only mentioned by the way; in regard to Shakespeare himself no occasion for an incidental mention offered itself, and the silence about his supposed travels must therefore not be regarded as a proof of their non-reality. Nash, in the dedication of his 'Almond for a Parrot,' which bears no date, but must have appeared before 1590, relates to William Kempe, that he was in Venice about 1588. 'Coming from Venice,' he writes, 'this last summer, and taking Bergamo in my way homeward to England, it was my hap, sojourning there some four or five days, to light in fellowship with that famous Francattip harlequin, who, perceiving me to be an Englishman by my habit and speech, asked me many particulars of the order and manner of our plays, which he termed by the name of representations. Amongst other talk he inquired of me, if I knew any such Parabolano, here in London, as Signior Charlatano Kempino? Very well, quoth I, and have been often in his company. He hearing me say so, began to embrace me anew, and offered me all the courtesy he could for his sake, saying, although he knew him not, yet for the report he had heard of his pleasance, he could not but be in love with his perfections being absent.'[2] Signior Charlatano Kempino himself danced

[1] See Inigo Jones, a Life of the Architect, by Peter Cunningham, &c. London (published for the Shakespeare Society), 1848.

[2] Pierce Penniless, ed. by Collier (for the Shakespeare Society), p. 10. Compare Collier, Memoirs of the Principal Actors, p. 98, 112 seqq.

his celebrated Morrisdance, not only before the Emperor of Germany, as already said, but what is more certain, beyond the Alps also. In 'The Return from Parnassus' (1616), he is greeted by one of the two Cambridge students with the words, 'God save you, Master Kempe; welcome Master Kempe from dancing the morris over the Alps.' Whereupon Kempe replies, 'Well, you merry knaves, you may come to the honour of it one day. Is it not better to make a fool of the world as I have done, than to be fooled of the world as you scholars are?'[1]

The descriptions of Venice given by Lewkenor, Fynes Moryson, and Thomas Coryat are well known.[2] Lewkenor had not been in Venice himself; his book, 'The Commonwealth and Government of Venice,'[3] is a translation of a treatise by Cardinal Gaspar Contareno, who was senator of Venice, and died in 1542, enriched with some additions from other sources. It contains a detailed account of the Venetian constitution and law, a description of the Rialto (p. 153), and a biographical list of the Doges up to Pasquale Cicogna (the author calls him Cenoca); but no indication can be found that the book was known to Shakespeare, and the legal proceedings in the 'Merchant of Venice' are widely different from those described by Lewkenor. Besides this, the treatise appeared after the 'Merchant of Venice.' Moryson's 'Itinerary, containing his Ten

[1] Hawkins, The Origin of the English Drama, iii. 271.

[2] Venice and Padua are also spoken of in Samuel Lewkenor's 'Discourse of all those Citties wherein doe flourish at this day Priviledged Universities' (1600), p. 31–33; yet this discourse contains nothing that Shakespeare could have made use of.

[3] London, 1599; the preface is dated the 13th of August, 1598.

Years' Travel through the dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Switzerland, Netherland, Denmark, Poland, Italy, Turkey,' &c., was originally written in Latin, and translated by the author into English; it did not appear till 1617, after the death of both its author and of Shakespeare. Tom Coryat undertook his journey in the year 1608, and published his account of it in 1611 ('Crudities,' &c.). After his return he enjoyed a rather equivocal celebrity, being praised by some, but still more ridiculed by others on account of his eccentricities. He was frequently invited to supper in order that he might enliven the meal by his stories and his odd presence.[1] How delighted Coryat was with Venice may be seen from his enthusiastic description. 'This incomparable city,' he says, 'this most beautiful queen, this untainted virgin, this paradise, this Tempe, this rich diadem and most flourishing garland of Christendom, of which the inhabitants may as proudly vaunt as I have read the Persians have done of their Ormus, who say that if the world were a ring, then should Ormus be the gem thereof—the same, I say, may the Venetians speak of their city, and much more truly.' Coryat describes the palaces of the princely merchants of Venice, as also their summer houses on the mainland, the Rialto, the Ghetto, &c., and states that the number of the Jewish inhabitants

[1] Ben Jonson, 'Bartholomew Fair,' III. 1: 'He has not been sent for and sought out for nothing at your great city-suppers, to put down *Coriat* and *Cokely*, and been laughed at for his labours.' 'If I travel any more, call me Coriat with all my heart.' Compare 'All's Well that Ends Well,' II. 5: 'A good traveller is something at the latter end of a dinner; but one that lies three thirds and uses a known truth to pass a thousand nothings with, should be once heard and thrice beaten.'

amounted to between five and six thousand.[1] In one single instance only is London placed above Venice. This is in regard to the theatre; 'the play-house, he says, is very beggarly and base in comparison of our stately play-houses in England; neither can their actors compare with us for apparel, shows, and music.' Coryat takes leave of Venice with the assurance that, were four of the richest estates in Somersetshire, where he was born, offered to him as a present on condition that he should never have seen Venice, his answer would be, that to see Venice was worth all the four estates.

In order to avoid repetition, we may here once for all point to the fact that these three works of travel were published after the respective plays of Shakespeare, and that therefore he cannot possibly have used them; nay, that in regard to Coryat not even the convenient makeshift of supposing that Shakespeare made use of the manuscript can be brought forward, because Coryat's travels took place twelve or fourteen years after the 'Merchant of Venice' was written. Other similar sources from which Shakespeare might have drawn his knowledge of Italy, have not, as far as we know, been discovered, in spite of the combined researches of so many Shakespearean scholars.

The possibility, therefore, that Shakespeare may have joined this file of travellers to Venice can scarcely be disputed. Yet it is in so far only a mere possibility which requires much more weighty arguments to be-

[1] Lewkenor (Commonwealth of Venice, p. 190), on the other hand, estimates the population of Venice at 190,714, of whom 1,157 were Jews. Coryat's statement seems at all events to be exaggerated.

come a probability. We have thus only levelled the ground upon which we mean to build, and now turn to those plays of the poet, the scenes of which are laid in Italy, and in the first place to those two, the scenes of which are laid in Venice. It would be difficult to say which play transfers us more completely to the city of the lagunes, the 'Merchant of Venice' or 'Othello,' although it is only the first act of the latter that is acted at Venice. It has repeatedly been remarked that what is called local colouring is only found to a small extent, if at all, in Shakespeare. Dr. Johnson has said that Shakespeare gives all nations the manners of England, and Ulrici remarks that, 'in Shakespeare's plays, and especially in his comedies, the name of a foreign country or place where the action is laid is only an external form; in reality the plays always take place in England, and in the same way as the personages speak English, so they are, as Goethe says, "eingefleischte Engländer," Englishmen to the backbone.'[1] This is, however, protesting too much. Romeo and Juliet, Othello, Desdemona, and Shylock, among others, are by no means Englishmen 'to the backbone,' and it cannot be denied that Shakespeare in the 'Merchant of Venice,' to leave other plays out of the question, has carefully observed and wonderfully hit the local colouring. There lies over this drama an inimitable and decidedly Italian atmosphere and fragrance, which certainly can be more readily felt than explained and analysed. Everything in it is so faithful, so fresh, and so true to nature, that the play cannot possibly be ex-

[1] Schlegel-Tieck'sche Übersetzung, herausgegeben von der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, vii. 121 seq.

celled in this respect. Byron, who considered it indispensable for a poet to see things himself, and was unable to write without knowing his subject from personal experience, has, even after a lengthened stay at Venice, not been able to surpass the truth and beauty of Shakespeare's local colouring. Shakespeare, with incomparable skill, gives us gentle hints and indications—apparently unimportant details—which excite in us a succession of thoughts, turn our feelings into a certain path, and give our imagination a direction towards a definite goal. By these means he transfers us, without our being aware of it, into an Italian atmosphere, and in the fifth act makes us enjoy the charms of an Italian night, as they could scarcely be felt more lively on the spot itself. The moonlight scene at Belmont is indeed a masterpiece which defies all rivalry, and is far above any that has proceeded from an Italian pen. The poet then leads us to the busy scene at the Exchange on the Rialto, and shows us in the distance the gondola in which Jessica and her lover are floating away. Let him who wishes thoroughly to understand and apprize Shakespeare's art in this respect, compare the 'Merchant of Venice' and B. Jonson's 'Volpone,' the scene of which is likewise laid in Venice. Jonson not only exhibits a profound knowledge of the Italian language, but shows himself conversant with Venetian institutions, customs, and localities; he, so to say, lays the local colouring on inches thick, but it is everywhere the work of a bookworm, whose object it is to display with self-sufficiency his own learning compiled *ad hoc* from other books. Jonson, by making his characters talk about the institutions, customs, and localities of their country,

and by putting Italian words and phrases into their mouths, fancies to make them genuine Italians. We there hear people speak in a confused medley about avocatori, mercatori, commendatori, notario, about the Piazza, San Mark, Zan Fritada, sforzato, ciarlitani, scartoccios, the mal caduco, vertigine in the head, moscadelli, unguento, osteria, Pantalone di Besogniosi, ragion del Stato, Procuratia, the Scrutineo, canaglia, tremorcordia, signiory of the Sanita, saffi, the Forty, the Ten, the Lazaretto, Bolognian sausages, Piscaria, the monastery of San Spirito, the Grand Canale, &c. If B. Jonson had wished to be consistent with himself on this point, he ought to have gone a step further, and to have made his Italians speak Italian, somewhat in the same way as Chapman has done with the German Princess Hedwig in his 'Alphonsus.' Instead of this, however, his persons frequently forget their parts by transferring themselves to London, and lending words to their acquaintance with the Cockpit, with Smithfield Fair, and Fleet Street. The native sixpence is found in one and the same line (in II. 1), by the side of the Italian moccinigo and bagatine, which from Jonson's point of view is a blunder; he should at least have avoided the English local colouring, for this is, so to say, the negative side of local colouring, that the poet should introduce nothing that disturbs the illusion of the hearer or reader in regard to the locality. It is strange that Jonson, in introducing so many Italian phrases and allusions, could count upon the understanding and sympathy of his audience, for his groundlings at least must have gazed in utter amazement, and for the benefit of his readers he ought to have furnished

his 'Volpone' with explanatory notes, as well as his masques. How very differently Shakespeare acts! He allows his characters to remain Englishmen externally, although even this is scarcely perceptible in the 'Merchant of Venice;' but he gives them Italian souls, Italian passions, and southern joyousness of life. Shakespeare only hints at costumes and scenery, while Jonson does not inconsiderably extend our knowledge of travelling in those days, especially in the scenes where his English travellers appear. We there learn that an English traveller had to be provided with a passport (license), that, as we now do, he had to present himself to the ambassador, and that, above all things, he must 'have the languages.' Sir Politick Would-be confesses that his motive for going to Venice was 'to learn the language' (II. 1); we hear that Peregrine was favoured by his Italian master, with whom he has evidently taken the lessons necessary for his journey, with rules and directions for travelling; that Venice was the place to learn how to handle a silver fork (IV. 1); and lastly, that Lady Politick Would-be at Venice studies 'tires, fashions, and behaviour' from the courtesans, just as our ladies now-a-days have accepted the most repulsive fashions from the Parisian demi-monde.

Such is Jonson's local colouring in comparison with Shakespeare's, and we may surely say that in this, as in all cases, it would have been better for his poetry if he had possessed no more Greek and Latin—inclusive of Italian—than his friend Shakespeare. In order to characterise Gifford's Jonsonian delusion we may mention the almost incredible judgment which he has

pronounced on this point. After having discussed Jonson's remodelling of 'Every Man in his Humour,' and the transference of the play from Florence to London, he continues: 'There was too much of English manners in the first version of the play, and the reformation of the piece was therefore well-timed and judicious. Jonson fell into no subsequent incongruities of this kind, for 'The Fox' is without any tincture of foreign customs, and his two tragedies are chastely Roman.'

Besides 'Volpone,' there is another play which invites comparison, and which, for the sake of justice, must not be passed over; this is Webster's, 'The White Devil, or Vittoria Corombona' (first published 1612), although the scene is not laid in Venice but in Rome, and in the last act apparently in Padua; the author only says, 'The Scene, Italy.' Venice is only once mentioned: 'Would I had rotted in some surgeon's house at Venice;'[1] a local colouring which every decent reader will decline with thanks. The play in general lacks the poetic fragrance which exercises such magic power in the 'Merchant of Venice.' It is full of horrors and vulgarity, without any trace of a southern atmosphere or of Italian life. The author, far from transferring us into the heart of Italy, like Shakespeare, only too frequently disturbs the illusion by mentioning English and Irish occurrences, and by alluding to Dutch and German customs. The following instances may be given: A Dantzick drummer (Dodsley l. c. 233); the Irish rebels (271); the Irish funerals (277); Westphalia bacon (293); Scotch holly-

[1] Dodsley (1825), vi. 262.

bread (319); the lions in the Tower (324); my German watch (64); Ireland breeds no poison (240); gallowses are raised, in the Low Countries, one upon another's shoulder (240); Dutch women go to church bearing their stool with them (249); this is Welsh to Latin (251); Worse than those tributes i' th' Low Countries paid, Exactions upon meat, drink, garments, sleep (252); &c. Are such allusions appropriate in a play the scene of which is laid in Italy? It need not be added that nothing of the kind is met with in Shakespeare, and that when in the 'Merchant of Venice' (III. 1), the Goodwins are mentioned, this allusion is introduced by the words, 'I think they call the place,' so that it is perfectly in character.

After what has been said it may perhaps be asked which of these three dramas, applying their local colouring as the standard, is the first to make the impression that its author has been on the spot and written from his own observations? Webster can scarcely come into consideration, he stands below the point of view which must here be taken; whether he has been in Italy or not, the secret of local colouring has remained a sealed book to him. Jonson may do what he likes, the greater the effort he makes the less he deceives us, and the more clearly we perceive that he does not speak from his own personal knowledge Shakespeare alone produces the impression and the belief that his poetry has arisen out of actual experience, that he himself, like Lorenzo and Jessica, has floated in a gondola, that he has walked with Shylock and Antonio on the Rialto, and that, like Portia and her friends, he has been intoxicated by the light of the stars,

the fragrance of the oranges, and the sounds of sweet music in some Italian garden of Armida.

This is certainly nothing but a subjective impression, which one reader receives and another does not (though we should like to convince ourselves of the existence of that other), an impression which may deceive and is too unsafe for an hypothesis to be built upon it. It may be replied that this is just the characteristic sign of genius, that it can transport us with itself into foreign lands, and bring foreign characters before us. Are we to suppose that Shakespeare in this respect was inferior to Schiller, who has succeeded in unrolling before our astonished eyes a picture of Switzerland most true to nature and most fresh in colouring, without ever having seen it himself? Or to Jean Paul, who in his 'Titan' has given a splendid picture of the Borromean Islands? This picture is indeed drawn in the most abstract generality, and could therefore be derived without difficulty from the author's imagination, whereas Schiller's detailed knowledge of Switzerland was acquired by laborious study and by oral communications from Goethe. Can it be supposed that Shakespeare made similar studies and received similar communications in regard to Italy? We shall defer the answer for a little while, and must admit that Shakespeare, although without giving positive details, has marvellously hit the local colouring in other plays too, where it cannot have sprung from personal observation. What a wonderful northern atmosphere surrounds us on the terrace of Elsinore, where we hear the waves of the Baltic breaking upon the grey rocks! In 'Macbeth' we are so completely conveyed to the Scotch

moors and mountains and into Ossianic mists, that the poet here also produces in us the belief that Scotland was not an unknown land to him—a question to which we shall have to return.

The poetic imagination may be ever so lively and creative, and the power of intuition ever so highly developed, one thing cannot be disputed, namely, that it bestows upon no one a knowledge of facts, but that such a knowledge can only be acquired either by experience or must be imparted by others. Dr. Johnson very correctly observes that 'Shakespeare, however favoured by nature, could impart only what he had learned.' Should we therefore succeed in pointing out in the 'Merchant of Venice' or elsewhere, any knowledge of positive facts respecting Italy which the poet could have obtained only in one of these two ways, and could it then be proved that he did not acquire it from books or oral communication, his journey to Italy would be established.

Let us repair in spirit to Belmont. The Belmont of the 'Pecorone' (where the story is exceedingly bare and meagre in regard to local colouring), may perhaps be looked for on the coast of Dalmatia; that of Shakespeare has its prototype unquestionably in one of those splendid summer residences, surrounded with well-kept gardens and adorned with treasures of art, which the merchant princes of Venice possessed even in Shakespeare's day, in La Mira, Dolo, and Strà on the Brenta; here are still now standing the ancient and renowned palaces of Strà, Zuanelli, Tiepolo, Bembo, Tron, and others. From the context it appears with certainty that Shakespeare possessed a perfectly accurate knowledge

of this locality. Portia sends her servant Balthazar to Padua,[1] to fetch the 'notes and garments' of her learned cousin Bellario, and then to meet his mistress at the 'common ferry' trading to Venice. She indeed tells Nerissa that they have to measure twenty miles that day; this, however, may be spoken at random, and she wishes perhaps by this evasive statement to conceal the true state of things.[2] In fact the question is only one about distances of a few hours, and if we transfer Belmont to Strà, Balthazar, who is desired to hasten with all imaginable speed, may, with a quick horse, return from Padua in a short time, and at the ferry overtake Portia, who left Belmont some time after him, and rode on slowly as beseems a lady. If Shakespeare had taken the ride himself before describing it, as Sir Walter Scott took that from Loch Vennachar to Stirling, described in the 'Lady of the Lake,' the statements could not agree better. The ferry to Venice was at that time at Fusine, at the mouth of the Brenta. Portia's words in the context are:—

> Now, Balthazar,
> As I have ever found thee honest-true,
> So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,

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[1] The first folio has the misprint Mantua instead of Padua, which has long since been corrected. From Fusine the old high road runs along the Brenta, past the above-mentioned places, to Padua. The entire distance from Fusine to Padua takes five hours by carriage; from Fusine to Mira two hours, from Mira to Dolo one hour, thence by Strà to Padua two hours.

[2] Twenty (like forty) very frequently serves to indicate an indefinite number. It is, however, an exceedingly remarkable coincidence that the distance between Venice and Dolo is exactly twenty Italian miles, and that the Italian mile corresponds exactly to an English mile. Can Shakespeare have known this, and is his statement, after all, to be taken literally? (1874.)

> And use thou all the endeavour of a man
> In speed to Padua: see thou render this
> Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;
> And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
> Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed
> Unto the tranect, to the common ferry
> Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
> But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee.

The nonsensical word 'tranect,' which is found in all the quartos and folios, and has been retained even by the Cambridge editors, proves that copyists and compositors possessed no knowledge of this word, and still less of the thing itself. Even the word 'traject,' which Theobald has correctly restored, is not a genuine English word, otherwise the poet would not have added the apposition 'to the common ferry,' which he surely did only to make the meaning clear to his readers and hearers. What visitor to Venice does not here directly recognise the Venetian traghetto (tragetto)? And whence did the poet get a knowledge of the traghetto? Coryat indeed informs us in his 'Crudities' (i. 210), that 'there are at Venice thirteen ferries or passages, which are commonly called traghetti;' but Coryat, for reasons stated above, is put out of the question once and for all. It might be imagined that Cesare Vecellio ('Degli abiti antichi,' &c., 1590), was the poet's source, but we have not the slightest cause to believe that Shakespeare knew this work, and even if he did, and understood sufficient Italian to read it, he would have found it to contain only sketches and poor descriptions of costumes, and not a word about the traghetto, so that the disbelievers in an Italian journey of Shakespeare cannot account for his knowledge by any other means than that of oral communication.

The ferry takes us across the 'laguna morta' and up the great canal to the city, where we in spirit land at the Rialto. Shakespeare displays a no less accurate knowledge of this locality than of the villas along the Brenta, as he does not confound the Isola di Rialto with the Ponte di Rialto. He knows that the exchange 'where merchants most do congregate' is upon the former, nay, he appears to have been better acquainted with the Isola di Rialto than Coryat, fifteen years afterwards, for the name of Gobbo, which he has bestowed on the clown, reminds us vividly of the Gobbo di Rialto, a stone figure which serves as a supporter to that granite pillar, of about a man's height, from which the laws of the Republic were proclaimed.[1] This figure, as far as we know, is not mentioned by Coryat. The name of Gobbo is indeed of frequent occurrence, and exists even now-a-days as a family name in Venice, but this does not answer the question how Shakespeare did get hold of it.

On the Rialto we meet Antonio and Shylock. We have before heard that there were a very considerable number of Jews in Venice, it matters not whether we follow Coryat's or Lewkenor's statement, whereas in England, and especially in London, they were not tolerated by the law.[2] Consequently it was as difficult for the poet in London to study the prototype of his Shylock, who is so true to nature, as it would have been easy for him in Venice. It can scarcely be doubted that Shakespeare, if he should have been in Venice,

[1] Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, v. 366 seqq.

[2] The Jews were expelled from England by Edward I., 1290, and were not readmitted until 1652, by Cromwell. Some few may have stealthily returned before that time. See p. 107, note.

must, like most travellers, have come into contact with Jews; for that such was the fact is proved by the words of Sir Politick Would-be (Volpone, IV. 1) who says that on his arrival in Venice he had—

> read Contarene,[1] took me a house,
> Dealt with my Jews to furnish it with moveables, &c.

The name of Shylock itself seems to favour such a supposition, for, like that of Jessica, it exists in none of the sources from which we know that Shakespeare drew his materials; both, to all appearance, have been borrowed from Genesis x. 24, and Genesis xi. 29.[2] It is true that the form of the name is Salah, both in the English and the German translation of the Bible, but Shylock comes so near the Hebrew form 'Schelach' (shot), that we are led to suppose that Shakespeare may have taken the name from some Jewish source. A variation of the same word is no doubt 'Scialac,' which, according to Hunter, occurs as the name of a Maronite from Mount Lebanon, who is spoken of as living in 1614, and who probably became known to Western Europe by way of Venice.[3] Jessica, in the German and English translations Isca, Hebrew Jiscah, signifies a spy or looker out,[4] which throws a remarkable light upon Shylock's warning :—

> Clamber not you up to the casements then,
> Nor thrust your head into the public street
> To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces,
> But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements, &c.

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[1] That is, the original of Lewkenor's 'Commonwealth of Venice.'

[2] In 'Massuccio di Salerno' the Jew's daughter is called 'Carmosina,' while the father, as in 'Il Pecorone,' has no name.

[3] Illustrations, i. 307 seq.; ii. 349.

[4] According to a valuable communication of Professor Heyd, of

In spite of this prohibition, Jessica nevertheless shows herself an alert looker out. Is this nothing but mere chance? Or are we to take it for a proof of the intercourse which Shakespeare may have had with Jews?

The first act of 'Othello' not only rivals the 'Merchant of Venice' in vivid freshness and unsurpassed truth to nature, but also contains a positive fact which, as it seems, supports the opinion that this freshness and truth are the result of the poet's own local knowledge. Othello brings Desdemona from her father's house to his residence in the 'Sagittary.' To this passage Knight adds the following note: 'This is generally taken to be an inn. It was the residence at the arsenal of the commanding officers of the navy and army of the Republic. The figure of an archer with his drawn bow over the gates still indicates the place. Probably Shakespeare had looked upon that sculpture.' Enquiries which a kind friend has made for us at Venice do not confirm Knight's statement, but on the contrary we are informed that commanders of the army and navy never had an official residence in the arsenal; that there was no such figure of an archer in the arsenal; and that only two portions of it had special

the Royal Library at Stuttgard, the English translation of the Bible by Th. Matthewe (printed by Th. Raynalde et Will. Hyll, 1549), as well as that printed by Thomas Petyt in 1551, read Jesca, which may at the same time serve as a hint for determining which translation of the Bible Shakespeare made use of. The old Italian translations of the Bible generally read Selah (or Sale) and Ischa, Isca, or Jese. The Bible of L. A. Giunti (Venegia, 1545), has Jescha, the two Biblia volgare of 1553 (Venetia, Aurel. Pincio) and of 1566 (Venet., Andr. Muschio) have Jesche. In the Septuagint the names sound Σαλά and Ἰεσχά, in the Vulgate Sale and Jescha. Tubal and Chus are taken from Genesis x. 2 and 6, without any alteration of the names.

names, the 'Inferno' and the 'Purgatorio;' that the name 'Sagittario' sounds more like that of a flag-ship, or that it must have been some building lying outside the arsenal. But these enquiries are perhaps not to be regarded as final, as it is difficult to believe that the explanation which Knight gives so positively, although without stating his authority, should be devoid of all foundation and completely erroneous. It is just possible that some traveller of the sixteenth century may have mentioned the subject, and in any case it would be worth the trouble not only once more to examine the works of Lewkenor, Coryat, and others, but also to make further enquiries at Venice, in order finally to settle this point.[1] For if the 'Sagittario' was actually a place in Venice, and not merely an invention of the poet's imagination, then the next question to be answered is, how Shakespeare got at this knowledge, and whether he could have obtained it otherwise than by having seen the place himself?

If Shakespeare was in Venice, it may at once be presumed that he also visited other towns in Upper Italy, such as Verona, the scene of 'Romeo and Juliet,' Padua, with its famous university, but particularly Mantua, which at that time possessed a great attraction to travellers, and Milan. Curiously enough we find in Shakespeare indications pointing to the two last-named towns. In the 'Winter's Tale' he speaks of Julio Romano with enthusiastic praise, and describes the statue of Hermione as his work. To the question why he should have selected this artist before all

[1] We take this opportunity to add, that the ship's name, 'a Veronesa,' in 'Othello' (II. 1), also deserves further attention.

others, some critics might be inclined to answer that he picked up the name at random, if we may use the expression. But such an answer would be quite unsatisfactory in the face of the fact that the poet most correctly estimates Romano's merits as an artist, and praises him not only in eloquent but in the most appropriate words : 'Performed,' he says, 'by that rare Italian master Julio Romano, who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile Nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape.' Shakespeare here, as in another passage which will afterwards occupy our attention, maintains that quality to be the highest excellence of art, which he regards as the highest also in dramatic poetry, and which forms the fundamental feature of his whole being—that is, truth to nature. No art-critic or art-historian can find anything to object to in his judgment of Romano. Kugler[1] says that Romano's peculiar tendency induced him 'to unfold in rapid strokes, a bold, fresh, natural life, unconcerned about the deeper life of the soul.' What he adds about Romano's relation to his master (Rafael), and about his defects in comparison with him, is of no importance to that side of the question which we are here considering. Burckhardt's[2] judgment agrees entirely with Kugler's. He ascribes to Romano a 'light and indefatigable imagination, which does not disdain to invade the domain of naturalism, and which is especially inclined to occupy itself with neutral subjects, as with the myths of antiquity, but which no longer has an inner relation to ecclesiastical painting,

[1] Kunstgeschichte, 1842, p. 728 seq.
[2] Cicerone, 1855, p. 935.

and could not but fall into boundless barbarism and a barren and rapid production.' Apart from this blame, Shakespeare is thus perfectly right in conceiving Julio Romano as the artist of natural truth; it is obvious that he in this respect must have felt himself akin to and drawn towards him. The same 'light and indefatigable imagination' for which Romano is celebrated, Shakespeare likewise possessed; he too 'unfolds a bold, fresh natural life with rapid touches,' but not certainly 'unconcerned about the deeper life of the soul.' In this latter point he is, on the contrary, immensely superior to the Italian, and in this lies his chief greatness. Neither could Shakespeare, from the nature of his whole being, stand in any 'inner relation to ecclesiastical painting,' but the representation of the classic myths which are so full of life, assuredly excited his sympathy in the highest degree.

The question here forces itself upon us as to the source from which Shakespeare may have drawn his knowledge. The above-mentioned travels, even apart from the chronological impossibility, could not furnish him with materials for his judgment of Romano, as they do not treat of art, much less of art-criticism. Manuals of the history of art, which he might have consulted, did not exist, with the single exception of the one presently to be mentioned, nor is it likely that there existed in London any of Romano's paintings, or copies of them, accessible to Shakespeare. Whence then did he obtain his knowledge, if not by having seen Romano's paintings himself? The Palazzo del T in Mantua, built by Romano, and filled with his paintings and drawings, was one of the wonders of the age. We

cannot be surprised if it was here that Shakespeare became enchanted by Romano's works in all their richness and beauty, and that he here learned to form a correct judgment of the peculiar nature of his art.

The chief, and apparently the most serious objection to this hypothesis, is very obvious—Shakespeare makes Romano a sculptor! Does not this prove complete ignorance, and could he have committed such an unpardonable mistake if he himself had been at Mantua? Or are we to excuse it as a poetical license? But such leniency would be too much even for the good-nature of the most enthusiastic worshipper of Shakespeare.[1] What, however, will be said if just this seeming error should most unexpectedly serve to confirm our hypothesis?

In Vasari, who, according to his own account, visited Romano at Mantua, we find the following two Latin epitaphs of the great painter :—

> Romanus moriens secum tres Julius arteis
> Abstulit : haud mirum quatuor unus erat.

The second inscription, which in Vasari precedes this distich, runs as follows :—

> Videbat Jupiter corpora sculpta pictaque
> Spirare, aedes mortalium aequarier coelo
> Julii virtute Romani : tunc iratus
> Concilio divorum omnium vocato
> Illum aetereis sustulit : quod pati nequiret
> Vinci aut aequari ab homine terrigena.[2]

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[1] Al. Schmidt (Schlegel-Tieck'sche Übersetzung, herausgegeben von der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, ix. 285), whether after the precedent of an earlier commentator we know not, endeavours to solve the difficulty in a manner with which we can in no way agree. Julio Romano, he says, was a painter and not a sculptor, hence, if we do not wish to admit an error, he can only have coloured the statue.

[2] Vasari, von Schorn und Förster, iii. b. p. 419. Julio Romano's

Tres artes! Corpora sculpta! It is true that Vasari makes no further mention of Romano's sculptures, neither do his German translators, nor, as far as we know, any recent art-historian, say a word about them.[1] But Shakespeare is nevertheless right; he has made no blunder, he has not abused the poetical license by introducing Romano as a sculptor. And more than this, his praise of Romano wonderfully agrees with the second epitaph, in which truth to nature and life is likewise praised as being Julio's chief excellence (if he could put breath into his work, —videbat Jupiter corpora spirare). Is this chance? Whether the statement of the two inscriptions, that Julio Romano was a sculptor as well as a painter and architect, be in accordance with historical facts or not, does not matter in the present case. Shakespeare had the less reason to doubt it, as the union of the three arts in one and the same hand was by no means without illustrious examples among Italian artists. In our opinion we here stand before the dilemma, either Shakespeare must have studied Vasari, or he had been in Mantua and had there seen Romano's works and read his epitaphs. A third supposition—oral communication—will hardly serve the purpose. We may here expressly add—although it is scarcely necessary to do so—that Greene's 'Dorastus and Fawnia,' from which Shakespeare drew his story, contains no mention of Julio Romano, and in fact knows nothing of a statue of Hermione (there called Bellaria). Vasari's work

tombstone in the Church of San Barnaba has completely disappeared since the renovation of the church.

[1] Even Carlo D'Arco, in his 'Istoria della vita e delle opere di Giulio Pippi Romano' (Mantua, 1838), is silent on this point.

was first published in 1550, and a second edition in 1568, but it was not translated into English till three hundred years afterwards (1850); the (unfinished) French translation also, was not published till 1803. Shakespeare must therefore have been a perfect master both of the Italian and Latin languages, to have made use of the work and the epitaphs; moreover he must have used the first edition of it, for that alone contains the inscription which we have placed second. Vasari, it is true, repeatedly praises the truth to nature by which Julio's works are distinguished, especially in the introduction to the first edition, subsequently omitted, where he says that we are enraptured by his pictures, and cannot help fancying that life itself is before our eyes. This introduction might indeed have been among Shakespeare's sources; but was Vasari a book of so great an attraction for him that he should have perused it without occasion?

There are two other passages which for the sake of completeness must not be passed over, as they might be supposed to point to Julio Romano, although with little probability. The first occurs in the Introduction to the 'Taming of the Shrew,' where the Lord says:—

> Carry him gently to my fairest chamber,
> And hang it round with all my wanton pictures.

This involuntarily reminds us of Romano's obscene drawings, which in their day created a great sensation, and are said to have induced him to quit Rome. As Marcantonio Raimondi published prints of them in 1524, Shakespeare might very well have seen them, either in the Palazzo del T, or in London; it must, however, be admitted that obscene pictures exist at all times and in

all countries, and need not be ascribed to Julio Romano's pencil. The second passage is of greater moment; it is in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' III. 1. :—

> This wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy;
> This senior-junior giant dwarf Dan Cupid.

The Rev. Henry Wellesley,[1] supported by the reading of the first folio ('This signior Junio's gyant dwarfe') ingeniously proposes to read :—

> This Signior Julio's giant dwarf, Dan Cupid,

and refers the words to the dwarf of the Cardinal Hippolyto dei Medici, Gradasso Berettai, of Norcia, whom Romano has added in Rafael's Battle of Constantine.[2] In Rafael's original drawing, which was preserved in the Duke of Devonshire's collection, both the dwarf and the two pages by the side of the emperor are wanting.[3] Julio Romano has repeated the head of this dwarf in his Gigantomachy, which proves that he had taken the cartoon with him to Mantua, so that Shakespeare might there have seen this striking figure. The matter, however, still requires further investigation.

The mention of the picture of Io, which likewise occurs in the Introduction to the 'Taming of the Shrew,' claims still more consideration :—

> *Sec. Serv.* Dost thou love pictures? we will fetch thee straight
> Adonis painted by a running brook,
> And Cytherea all in sedges hid,
> Which seem to move and wanton with her breath,
> Even as the waving sedges play with wind.

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[1] Stray Notes on the Text of Shakespeare, 1865, p. 12 seq.

[2] The same reading has already been adopted by Tieck. According to the Rev. H. Wellesley this giant dwarf is also introduced into the foreground of the 'Allocuzione.'

[3] Vasari, translated by Schorn and Förster, iii. b. p. 388.

Lord. We'll show thee Io as she was a maid,
And how she was beguiled and surprised,
As lively painted as the deed was done.
Third Serv. Or Daphne roaming through a thorny wood,
Scratching her legs that one shall swear she bleeds,
And at that sight shall sad Apollo weep,
So workmanly the blood and tears are drawn.

In the first place the passage again proves what stress Shakespeare lays upon truth to nature and concrete life in art, and that he thinks it to be the highest perfection of the artist; in a word, it shows his devotion to realism. The impression produced by these lines upon the reader is that they allude to Correggio's celebrated picture, for to ascribe the surprising agreement of the description with the painting to mere chance, seems to us almost to be a greater demand upon our powers of belief than to suppose that Shakespeare had seen the picture; which if he was in Italy he might have done in the easiest and most natural way, as Correggio's Io was at that time (*i.e.* between 1585 and 1600), in the palace of the sculptors Leoni and son at Milan. It even then enjoyed great reputation and was visited and admired by travellers.[1] It is most improbable that a copy of the picture should have existed in London; there was not even a print of it at that time, for the oldest known print is by Franz van den Steen, who was born at Antwerp in 1604. Hence if Shakespeare knew the picture, he can only have seen it at Milan. In Walpole's 'Anecdotes of Painting,' i. 148, mention is indeed made of a painting of Holbein representing Io and Jupiter, which is said to have been in the Duke of Buckingham's collection, but we can attach very little

[1] Julius Meyer, Correggio (Leipzig, 1871), p. 344 seq., 489.

faith to this statement, as Walpole's work is anything but a trustworthy authority. Holbein did not paint mythological subjects, and Woltmann, in his excellent work, 'Holbein und seine Zeit,'[1] knows nothing about any such picture. It is possible that there may have existed a similar picture by some other master, for many pictures were and are still given out as Holbein's, which were certainly not painted by him.

It might be conjectured that the two other pictures also, Cytherea and Adonis (a subject with which the poet seems frequently to have occupied himself), and Apollo and Daphne, are not creations of the poet's imagination, but that they correspond to actual paintings which he had seen somewhere. Both subjects have been frequently painted by Italians, even by Julio Romano himself in the frescoes of the Farnesina, the cartoons of which he subsequently took with him to Mantua, where they certainly still existed at Shakespeare's time. Titian also has painted a Venus and Adonis which probably existed in Venice. But as far as we know these pictures do not correspond with Shakespeare's description, and we have as yet not succeeded in discovering the paintings which he may have had before his mind, when penning these lines; the aid of an art-historian and of a collection of engravings is indispensable for this purpose. Shakespeare may possibly have reproduced freely what he had seen, so that his originals cannot now be recognised, or the respective pictures may have been lost. There are also references to actual, although unknown paintings in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' III. 1 ('like a man after

[1] Leipzig, 1866–68.

the old painting'), and in the 'Tempest,' III. 3 ('the picture of Nobody'); whereas the wonderful description of the painting representing the destruction of Troy ('Lucrece,' 1366–1463), seems to have originated solely in the poet's own imagination. It differs in its character essentially from the description of the other pictures.

The lover of facts who incredulously shakes his head at such conjectures has doubtless, in reading these pages, various objections ready at the tip of his tongue, which he feels convinced will at once refute this—as well as any other—hypothesis. The wrong accentuation of the Italian proper names, the geographical blunders respecting Upper Italy, in the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' and in the 'Tempest;' the often recurring ridicule which the poet pours forth on travelling and the travellers of his time—who, in the face of such facts, could be persuaded that Shakespeare himself should have travelled and been in Italy? We are bold enough to face these objections, and accordingly begin with the accentuation of the proper names. It must be acknowledged that Shakespeare in all cases attached very little importance to such things; and he would easily have consoled himself about the reproach that the wrong accentuation of Stephάno, Rómeo, and Desdemóna, had escaped him.[1] Without express enquiry, for which he had no occasion, Shakespeare may scarcely have heard these names in Italy, or if he did, he forgot their correct pronunciation. Stephano, with

[1] Compare also 'Andrónicus.' Mr. Ch. A. Brown points to the fact that even the learned B. Jonson—in 'Volpone'—has used the name Voltore with a wrong quantity.

the accentuated penultimate, however, occurs only in the 'Merchant of Venice,' whereas it is used with the correct quantity in the 'Tempest.' Skottowe[1] is of opinion that Shakespeare learnt the correct accentuation in the meantime from the first draft of B. Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour,' which is very possible; nay, B. Jonson was not at all unlikely to have occasionally drawn his friend's attention to such mistakes. The accentuation Rómeo, which Byron ridicules with unjust harshness,[2] was familiar to the English from Arthur Brooke's 'Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet' (1562), and perhaps also from some older play, so that Shakespeare had no reason to doubt its correctness or to enter upon linguistic investigations about the subject; nay, even if he had known the correct accentuation it would scarcely have been advisable to come forward with such a superfluous innovation, which would only have suited the barren and unpoetical learning of a Jonson. The name Desdemona has been derived by the poet from Cinthio's 'Hecatommithi,' either from the Italian original or from the French translation by Chappuys, and as the prose of these sources gave him no clue as to the quantity, he accentuated it according to the spirit of the English language. He could not have known that this pronunciation is very offensive to the Italians; how many admirers of Shakespeare, both English and German, may have visited Venice with-

[1] Life of Shakespeare, ii. 327, note.

[2] Moore, Life and Letters of Lord B., London, 1866 (1 vol.) p. 487: 'Not Rómeo as the barbarian writes it.' Brooke generally employs the form Romeus as a word of either two or three syllables, more rarely Romeo, and this probably only for the sake of rhyme; both forms with him have, without exception, the accent on the first syllable.

out learning it.[1] A special objection has been raised against the poet because in 'Hamlet' he has used the name Baptista for a woman, after having employed it correctly in the 'Taming of the Shrew;' this was considered a decisive proof of Shakespeare's ignorance or carelessness until A. von Reumont has recently pointed out that in Italy Baptista indeed occurs as the name of a woman,[2] a usage which is no more surprising than that Maria has been employed as the name of a man. The charge of ignorance is thus turned into its opposite, and becomes a proof of the thoroughness of Shakespeare's knowledge.

At the head of the geographical errors which the poet is said to be guilty of in regard to Italy, stands the circumstance that he makes Valentine (in the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona'), embark at Verona for Milan; Valentine says that his father is waiting at the road to see him shipped, and Panthino hurries Launce off so that he may not lose the tide and be obliged to post after his master with oars. Curiously enough, Launce, in replying, speaks of a river, and says that if it were dry he could fill it with his tears. If Shakespeare's supposed journey to Italy were assigned to the year 1593 or later, we might adopt Mr. Ch. A. Brown's interpretation that the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona' was written previous to that date, and that this geographical confusion might thus be explained. The account given in the 'Tempest' of Prospero's and Miranda's expulsion from Milan, though of a some-

[1] Farmer's Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare (1st ed.), p. 13.

[2] Allgemeine Zeitung, October 21, 1870, Beilage. As I am informed by a friend the instances given by Reumont admit of augmentation.

what loose nature, yet proves nothing against the poet's knowledge, as it is clear from the context that the two were first taken across a portion of land before they reached the bark :—

> Whereon,
> A treacherous army levied, one midnight
> Fated to the practice did Antonio open
> The gates of Milan ; and, i' the dead of darkness,
> The ministers for the purpose hurried thence
> Me and thy crying self. . . . .
> In few, they hurried us aboard a bark,
> Bore us some leagues to sea ; where they prepared
> A rotten carcass of a boat, &c.

We meet with a similar inaccuracy in Webster's 'Vittoria Corombona,' A. IV., where Flamineo proposes to travel from Rome to Padua—via Ancona ?—in the following manner :—

> We may attire her (viz. Vittoria) in a page's suit,
> Lay her post-horse, take shipping, and amain
> For Padua.

This much is certain—whether Shakespeare was in Italy or not—he knew as well that Milan and Verona are no maritime towns, as it was not unknown to him that Bohemia is an inland country and that the forest of Arden breeds no lions. Geographical and chronological nicety, however, is no requisite of romantic comedy, and Shakespeare therefore might well set it aside; the Bohemian coast, moreover, he borrowed from Greene's 'Dorastus and Fawnia.' And yet even this point might gain a different aspect if we consider that Upper Italy as early as the sixteenth century was intersected by canals, a fact which Shakespeare must have been aware of had he visited the country, so that the looseness of his descriptions would at least be

reduced to a comparatively small measure. There appears indeed to have been a regular system of communication by these watercourses; the barks which were employed for the purpose were called 'corriere' by the Venetians.[1] Mr. Ch. A. Brown (112), observes that a very usual way of travelling from Milan to the Adriatic, was to go by land to Piacenza, and then to sail down the Po. Whether it was possible to go by water from Verona to Milan is doubtful, nay, in all probability it must be denied.

As regards the third objection, it is perfectly true that the poet repeatedly ridicules the fashion of travelling, and foolish travellers. The respective passages are so well known that it will be sufficient to quote only the one from 'As You Like It,' IV. 1: 'Farewell, Monsieur Traveller: look you lisp and wear strange suits, disable all the benefits of your own country, be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are, or I will scarce think you have swam in a gondola.' But Shakespeare is no enemy to the right use of travelling, which he acknowledges to be an excellent means of education and self-culture; he only censures such travellers of whom the homely German proverb says: 'Sie fliegen als Gänschen über den Rhein und kommen als Gickgack wieder heim' (they fly abroad as goslings and return home as geese). This ridicule was levelled at

[1] 'Corriera, nell' uso veneziano, era quella barca che portava i viaggiatori fra Venezia e l'altre città del Veneto sui canali o sui fiumi.' Pasqualigo, Opere di Shakespeare (Venezia, 1872), i. 22. Goethe travelled by the 'courier-ship' from Padua to Venice, and thence to Ferrara. See his 'Italienische Reise.'

fops of the stamp of Gabriel Harvey or Tom Coryat, who after their return home dressed and behaved like Italians, as if they had forgotten their English ways, a folly against which the poet's healthy mind and his patriotism must have alike revolted. That such reproofs on the part of the poet would be quite compatible with his having travelled himself is proved by the example of Nash, whom we know positively to have been in Italy, and who notwithstanding is no less sharp than Shakespeare in rebuking travelling fools and braggarts. The description he gives in 'Pierce Penniless' (p. 17) of a travelled upstart is too characteristic to be omitted. 'All Italianato,' he says, 'is his talke, and his spade peake is as sharpe as if he had been a pioneer before the walls of Roan. Hee will despise the barbarisme of his owne countrey, and tell a whole legend of lyes of his trauayles vnto Constantinople. If he be challenged to fight from his delaterie dye-case, hee objects that it is not the custome of the Spaniard, or the Germaine, to look backe to euerie dog that barkes. You shall see a dapper Jacke, that hath beene but once at Deepe, wring his face round about as a man would stirre vp a mustard pot, and talke English through the teeth, like Jaques Scabd-hams, or Monsieur Mingo de Moustrapo; when (poore slaue) he hath but dipt his bread in wylde boares grease and come home againe, or been bitten by the shinnes by a wolfe; and saith he hath adventured vppon the barricadoes of Gurney, or Guingan, and fought with the yong Guise hand to hand.' From all that we know of Shakespeare's character, travelling must have produced an entirely opposite effect upon him; it could only have

increased his love for his own country, which was indeed the effect produced upon all intelligent and educated travellers, as we again learn from 'Pierce Penniless, (p. 19), where Nash says: 'There's no man loues the smoake of his owne country that hath not been syngde in the flame of an other soyle.'

After having thus reduced the objections of conservative critics to their right proportions, we are stopped by another difficulty, by the question as to what date the supposed journey of Shakespeare is to be assigned. It is not very probable that he should have felt inclined or possessed the means for such an undertaking before he had gained a footing in London. He was surely more likely to have been fully occupied in providing for his own and his family's existence, and by the strong desire to bring the first-fruits of his muse before the public, and thus to see himself recognised as a poet; an endeavour which he possibly took even more to heart than the question of existence. It was only the occupation with the Italianising poetry of his age, and his consequent work at Italian subjects, that gradually directed his thoughts and wishes to Italy, among whose poets and in whose towns he had already so often wandered in spirit. Was it not a perfectly natural wish for him to see with his own eyes those places which he had so frequently seen conjured up before his fancy on the boards, places which he had even himself already repeatedly chosen for the scenes of his plays? Strange it certainly is that Shakespeare, who has given expression to all tones and vibrations of the inner Aeolian harp should never have uttered words expressing the desire to travel, the longing to see foreign lands. Can

it be that this longing to see foreign lands, and that supreme desire of Faust 'to follow the sun in his course,'[1] is a modern acquisition of the human heart? The only passage in Shakespeare which might suggest something of the kind, curiously enough, refers to Venice again; we speak of the words of Holofernes in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' IV. 2: 'Ah, good old Mantuan! I may speak of thee as the traveller doth of Venice:

> Venetia, Venetia,
> Chi non ti vede, non ti pretia.'

That the poet may possibly have borrowed these lines from Florio's 'Second Fruits' (1591) does not affect our question, for he would not have done so had they not touched his sympathy.[2] Lastly, the difference between Shakespeare's earlier and his later Italianising comedies is so striking, that this also points to the supposition of a journey intervening between them as the only satisfactory explanation. We cannot help agreeing with Knight who assigns the supposed journey to Italy to the year 1593, so that the 'Merchant of Venice,' 'Othello,' and perhaps also the 'Taming of the Shrew' (if the latter must not be referred to an earlier date), would directly have followed the poet's

[1] 'Der Sonne nach und immer nach zu streben.'

[2] It is doubtful whether 'Love's Labour's Lost' ought not to be fixed at an earlier date; Hertzberg (Schlegel-Tieck'sche Uebersetzung, herausgegeben von der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, vii. 252) is inclined to assume the year 1590. We should then be at a loss to explain whence Shakespeare took the above Italian lines. Can he have read them from the manuscript of Florio's book? Or are we to suppose the lines to be a later interpolation, a sigh of remembrance for the never-to-be-forgotten Queen of the Adriatic? Certain it is that 'Love's Labour's Lost' was 'newly corrected and augmented,' and that its original form has unfortunately been lost.

return, when he was still filled with the impressions he had received, and when the whole charm of Italy and its sky unconsciously guided his pen. It is well known that during the year 1593 the theatres were closed for several months on account of the plague,[1] so that Shakespeare had not only leisure enough for a journey, but would gladly have fled from the dangerous and pestilential atmosphere of the metropolis. Could he have employed this interruption of his theatrical engagements and the time of general stagnation more profitably than by such a journey? The Queen also, for the same reason, remained at a distance and spent the time from the 1st of August to Christmas at Windsor. Knight also supports his conjecture by some remarks on the 'Taming of the Shrew,' and on the 'Merchant of Venice,' communicated to him by Miss Martineau.[2] 'In the local illustrations to the "Taming of the Shrew," and the "Merchant of Venice,"' he says, 'with which we were favoured by Miss Martineau, will be found some very striking proofs of Shakespeare's intimate acquaintance, not only with Italian manners, but with those minor particulars of the domestic life of Italy, such as the furniture and ornaments of houses, which could scarcely be derived from books, nor, with reference to their minute accuracy, from the conversation of those who had "swam in a gondola." These observations were communicated to us by our excellent friend without any acquaintance with the opinions that

[1] Knight, William Shakespeare, a Biography, 354 seq., 362–366. Collier, History of English Dramatic Poetry, i. 292 seq.

[2] Unfortunately these illustrations have, as far as we know, not been published; at least they are neither mentioned by Lowndes (Bohn's edition), nor by Allibone.

had been just then advanced on this matter by Mr. Brown.'

Knight, however, not only declares himself in favour of an Italian journey of Shakespeare, but is also convinced that he visited Scotland. Guesses in this direction had indeed been previously made, but without any plausible arguments. William Guthrie, probably relying on Spottiswood's 'History of the Church of Scotland,' relates in his 'General History of Scotland' (1767), that King James desired Queen Elizabeth, in 1599, to send him a company of English comedians, to whom he, in defiance of his clergy, gave a license to act at court and in the Scotch metropolis. Guthrie thinks that 'the immortal Shakespeare' was in all probability one of this company;[1] as, however, he left this conjecture unsupported by any evidence, it was justly rejected by Malone. We know that Shakespeare's company played in London at the time mentioned, and if therefore English actors actually visited Edinburgh in 1599, they cannot have been the Lord Chamberlain's company. Sir John Sinclair (Statistical Account of Scotland) conjectures that Shakespeare was one of that company of actors who performed at Perth in June, 1589. Knight, on the other hand, founds his theory upon William Kennedy's 'Annals of Aberdeen' (London, 1818), from which he thinks it appears with tolerable certainty that the Lord Chamberlain's company played at Aberdeen in 1601, and it was on this occasion, according to his conviction, that Shakespeare visited

[1] Compare Collier, History of English Dramatic Poetry, i. 344. A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, ed. by H. H. Furness, vol. ii. 407–410.

Scotland.[1] Shakespeare, he thinks, as a shareholder and proprietor of the wardrobe of the theatre, could not have allowed his company to go abroad without him. However, since Mr. Halliwell's recent discovery, it has become very doubtful whether Shakespeare actually occupied any such position in his company. Knight considers it impossible that the poet could have acquired the surprisingly true local colouring and knowledge of localities which are met with in 'Macbeth' from books or oral communications. In the present case, however, the poet does not, as in the description of Venice, display a knowledge of actual and tangible details, but gives a general colouring which may have originated in his own imagination, and the points of resemblance may partially have been due to other sources, or even to accident. The same may be said of those features in the tragedy which remind us of the Gowrie conspiracy, for the explanation of which Knight likewise has recourse to a sojourn of the poet in Scotland. He dwells on the fact that the Earl of Gowrie (like his father and grandfather) was given to superstition, and to the belief in occult sciences, like Macbeth, and that Macbeth's murdering the two attendants in the King's sleeping apartment coincides remarkably with the rash manner in which the Earl of Gowrie and the Master of Ruthven were despatched in King James's room. He might also have compared Malcolm's and Donalbain's flight to England with that of Gowrie's two younger brothers. Knight is

[1] Knight also refers to 'The Book of Bon Accord, or a Guide to the City of Aberdeen' (1839), and to a treatise 'On the Site of Macbeth's Castle at Inverness,' by John Anderson, in the 'Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland,' vol. iii. (1828).

convinced that Shakespeare heard these details of the Gowrie conspiracy on the spot, where they indeed must still have been most vividly remembered, for the visit of the English actors to Aberdeen took place only about fourteen months after this mysterious event. However, what is usually heard on the spot itself cannot, as a rule, be depended upon, as it generally degenerates into inaccuracy and exaggeration, particularly when, as in the present case, the actual facts are intentionally concealed. Besides this, the Londoners must have known the details of the Gowrie conspiracy as well as the Scotch; perhaps they even possessed a more trustworthy account of it than the good people of Aberdeen or Perth, for Knight himself mentions that a detailed and truthful report of the conspiracy was published at London as early as 1600 by the same Valentine Simmes whose press also produced several quarto editions of Shakespeare's plays, and that another account in Latin appeared simultaneously at Edinburgh. Both were accessible to Shakespeare, and perfectly explain whatever there is of resemblance between the tragedy of 'Macbeth' and the Gowrie conspiracy.

Still less can be said for Shakespeare's supposed topographical knowledge of the castle of Inverness. He certainly in this case does differ from Holinshed in an important feature, but in a feature which proves nothing for Knight's theory. In Holinshed the witches meet Macbeth on a lawn, while Shakespeare has converted the lawn into a heath, which harmonises much better with the doings of the witches, as also with the character of Scotch scenery; the historical truth with which Shakespeare was furnished he turned into poetic

truth. That Inverness in reality is surrounded by wild moors cannot be regarded as a proof that Shakespeare's improvement on the chronicler was due to a personal knowledge of the locality, and as little force can be ascribed to the circumstance set forth by Mr. Anderson, that, agreeing with the locality, which is by no means established but in every respect only conjectured, the poet placed the castle-gate towards the south. The castle, the ruins of which Dr. Johnson and Boswell contemplated with such deep veneration, was no longer the old one, and the position of the latter is only inferred from untrustworthy traditions and faint traces in the formation of the ground.

Justly perceiving that no corresponding result can thus be obtained, Knight puts his lever in at another point. The figures of the 'weird sisters,' he says, are wholly different from the usual creations of popular superstition, and are unique and unsurpassed in the whole domain of poetry. This he ascribes partly to the character of the scenes in which they appear, and partly to the poet's loftier powers of imagination; but at the same time he finds the soil from which this extraordinary union of a popular belief and a poetical creation has sprung, rather in Scotch than in English superstition. This naturally leads him to the enquiry how Shakespeare could have become acquainted with Scotch folklore. It is proved by the edicts of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Elizabeth, that the belief in witches and witchcraft in England was neither widely spread nor of a luxuriant growth; the superstitions of the people received an impulse by the very edict which James soon after his accession

issued against them, and still more by his 'Dæmonology.' The former, according to Knight, 'deals with the offence with a minute knowledge of its atrocities which the learning of England had not yet attained to.' It was very different in Scotland, where during the years 1596–97 a great trial was going on against Janet Wishart and her accomplices on account of witchcraft, and where within that year no less than twenty-three women and one man were burnt to death for this crime, that is, more than were condemned to the flames in England for the same cause during the whole century from Henry's edict to the year 1644. The legal proceedings published by the Spalding Club unfold a picture of popular customs and popular fanaticism such as is scarcely equalled, at least in England. We here, as Knight remarks, find forms of superstition and sorcery of which the English knew nothing, but which harmonise wonderfully with the sorceries of Shakespeare's witches. He thinks that Shakespeare's Hecate is so very like the queen of Elphen or Elfame in the Aberdeen trials, that the latter must be regarded as his model for the characterisation of the queen of the witches. Knight here specially adduces the superstitions referring to maritime affairs, of which Shakespeare, he says, could have obtained no knowledge in his inland county, and which in fact are not met with in the laws, the learned treatises, or the dramatic poetry of the time, and consequently could not have existed in England.[1] On the contrary, they were rife at Aberdeen, and, according to Knight, it was there that Shakespeare became acquainted with this species of

[1] Knight, William Shakespeare, a Biography, 433.

superstition. It may, however, be asked if the sailors of the port of London were likely to have been less superstitious than those in the port of the Granite City! If any one form of superstition was more widely spread than others, it was assuredly the superstition of sailors. This is by no means an arbitrary hypothesis, but a fact which can be proved, and we actually meet with a sailor's superstition in Shakespeare which Knight has overlooked, viz., the superstition that a corpse on board a ship brings bad luck, and that the stormy ocean will not rest until the ship 'be cleared of the dead' ('Pericles,' III. 1). 'That's your superstition,' says Pericles, when the sailors urge him to throw Thaisa overboard, whom they believe to be dead; whereupon the first sailor replies: 'Pardon us, sir; with us at sea it hath been still observed: and we are strong in custom.'[1] Of the comparisons which Knight institutes between the passages in Shakespeare and the prevailing superstition in Aberdeen, only the one in 'Macbeth,' I. 3, is striking:

> But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
> And like a rat without a tail,
> I'll do, I'll do, I'll do.

The witches who bore witness against Dr. Fian, who was burnt as a sorcerer at Edinburgh in 1591, said among other things, 'that all they together went to sea, each one in a riddle or sieve.' This coincidence, though still unexplained, yet is far from being a satisfactory argument to prove Shakespeare's visit to Scot-

[1] The belief also that the bouncing and tumbling of porpoises presages a storm ('Pericles,' II. 1), may be alleged here; at least it helps to prove that Shakespeare's knowledge in this branch of popular belief was not confined to inland counties.

land. All the other points of resemblance are vague and readily admit of a different explanation, even if we set aside Dr. Farmer's conjecture that Shakespeare found the models of his witches in the three sibyls which appeared in the play performed in honour of King James at Oxford in 1605.

Knight lastly brings forward another argument which he regards as conclusive. Among a number of other persons one 'Laurence Fletcher, comediane to his Majestie' was admitted a burgess of the borough of Aberdeen on the 22nd of October, 1601, the magistrates having some days before granted thirty-two marks to the King's servants who had acted in the town and who had been specially recommended by his Majesty.[1] Knight does not doubt that there was some connection between these two facts, and comes to the conclusion that Laurence Fletcher was the head of the company referred to, and that the magistrates conferred this honour upon him as an acknowledgment of their satisfaction with the performances of the company, while at the same time it showed their desire to comply with the King's wishes and intentions. He further concludes that the King's servants were evidently English, for Scotland at that time had no company of actors of its own, any more than it had a drama; James, therefore, to gratify his partiality for theatrical exhibitions, had English actors sent to him, and it was indeed the Lord

[1] 'The samen day The prouest Bailleis and counsall ordanis the svme of threttie tua merkis to be gevin to the kingis serwandes presently in this burcht . . . quha playes comedeis and staige playes. Be reason they ar recommendit be his majesties speciall letter and hes played sum of their comedies in this burcht.' Knight, William Shakespeare, a Biography, 441.

Chamberlain's company whom he appointed his comedians. Knight admits that Fletcher is not named in the list of the first folio, though he doubtless was a member of the company, for Augustine Phillipps in 1605 bequeathed a thirty-shilling piece of gold to his 'fellow' Shakespeare, and twenty shillings to his 'fellow' Laurence Fletcher. He also thinks that Fletcher and Shakespeare stood at the head of that company for which James, soon after his accession in England, issued the well-known patent dated Greenwich, May 17, 1603. In this patent the actors, he says, are by no means raised to the rank of servants of the King, but are simply styled 'our servants,' and their appointment to this dignity must therefore have been made before, *i.e.*, in Scotland. There can consequently, according to Knight, be no doubt but that the actors who played at Aberdeen were the Lord Chamberlain's company, under the direction of Fletcher, and that Shakespeare was one of their number.

This argumentation, however, has its weak points, which upon closer examination must necessarily make us very cautious. In the first place the connection between the visit of the players to Aberdeen and Fletcher receiving the freedom of the borough is anything but proved, nay, the assumption of such a connection is a *petitio principii*, and even contradicts the plain words of the document. The document says that the freedom of the borough was bestowed upon 'Sir Francis Hospitall of Haulszie,' a French nobleman who had been specially recommended by the King, and upon the knights and gentlemen whom the King had

given him as a suite.[1] The assumption that the list of those who on this occasion were admitted as burgesses included other persons not belonging to this suite is hardly admissible, and we cannot do otherwise than class Laurence Fletcher among the followers of the Frenchman. It is well known that distinguished noblemen when travelling were accompanied by their companies of players, and if the Frenchman had not brought any such company with him, which perhaps was not the custom of his country, there was nothing to be done but to provide him, according to English notions and customs, with one corresponding to his rank. The King therefore lent him his court comedian, who in so far may be regarded as a pendant to 'My Lord of Leicester's jesting player.' Knight also mistakes the position of the trumpeter, Archibald Sym, who on the same occasion was admitted into the guild of burgesses; in his opinion he was the state trumpeter or herald, whose business it was to assist in proclaiming the royal commands at the city cross, which Knight thinks to have been a 'dignified occupation.' But as we learn from the Introduction to the 'Taming of the Shrew,' travelling lords were attended by a trumpeter just as

[1] 'The quhilk day Sir Francis Hospitall of Haulszie Knycht Frenschman being recommendit be his majistie to the Prouest Bailleis and Counsall of this brocht to be favorablie Interteneit with the gentilmen his majesties seruands efter specifeit quha war direct to this burcht be his majestie to accumpanie the said Frenshman being ane nobillman of France cumming only to this burcht to sie the towne and cuntrie the said Frenshman with the knightis and gentillmen folowing wer all ressauit and admittit Burgesses of Gild of this burcht quha gave thair aithis in common form folowis the names of thame that war admittit burgesses.' It may be observed that the expression 'his majesty's servants' does not seem to be employed here in its specific meaning, as they are styled 'gentlemen.'

well as travelling players. 'Sirrah,' says the Lord there to his servant when he hears the trumpet sounding :—

> Sirrah, go see what trumpet 'tis that sounds :
> Belike, some noble gentleman that means,
> Travelling some journey, to repose him here.

The servant returns with the answer :—

> An 't please your honour, players
> That offer service to your lordship.

Bassanio, too, is accompanied by a trumpeter on his return to Belmont. Lorenzo says to Portia :—

> Your husband is at hand ; I hear his trumpet,

and the stage direction adds, 'a tucket sounds.' There can consequently be little doubt that both the trumpeter Archibald Sym and the comedian Laurence Fletcher were added to the Frenchman's suite by the King. What the French knight had done to deserve so much honour at the hands of his Scotch Majesty does not concern us here. It would be more important and more to the point to enquire how it was that Laurence Fletcher came to be in the King's service, and whether he stood alone or at the head of a company. However, even respecting this point it would be useless to lose ourselves in further conjectures for which there is no foundation whatever. Must it be considered as an established fact that Scotland in those days possessed no players of its own, and that it had to apply to the 'southrons' for this commodity? Is the identity of the Scotch Laurence Fletcher with the London Fletcher in any way proved? We know, to our regret, that there existed contemporaneously more than one John

Shakespeare, more than one William Shakespeare, and probably more than one Anne Hathaway; may there not have been a duplicate of Laurence Fletcher too? The supposition that James engaged the Lord Chamberlain's company as his own comedians while he yet resided in Edinburgh is open to great doubt, for this company was recognised as the Queen's servants, and, as Knight himself admits, was generally called so about 1590. Could James have ventured upon appointing them his servants without adding fuel to the constant jealousy and heartburning that existed between the two courts? Would not the Queen's sanction have been required, or would it not at least have been according to etiquette to ask for it? And granting that James' court comedian was the London Fletcher, might he not have been appointed to form an independent company at the Scotch court, without bringing any colleagues with him from London? Enough; from whatever side we regard the question we find ourselves everywhere surrounded by uncertainty, not to say improbability, and a visit of Shakespeare to Scotland would tax our belief in a much higher degree than his journey to Italy. There was at that time no such frequent intercourse between England and Scotland as there was with Italy, the minds of the people were not yet open to the natural beauties of the Highlands, education and culture were less advanced in Scotland than in England, and nothing enticed English poets, authors, or scholars to the land of Ossian. The expeditions of Ben Jonson and the Water-poet Taylor to Edinburgh are exceptional cases, and were perhaps undertaken partly on account of their eccentricity.

Knight's power of belief indeed goes so far that upon this feeble substratum he traces Shakespeare's journey to Scotland in all its details; he even knows that he travelled alone, and describes all those places where James may possibly have held his court at the time, and where consequently Shakespeare might have displayed his art before him. The illustrations given by Knight of these residences and of the principal stations on the journey cannot produce any impression except upon the imagination of the most credulous reader. If Shakespeare became acquainted with his own country beyond his native shire, it was assuredly not in a northern direction, but with the midland counties, and still more so with those on the south coast. That he knew the latter from personal observation may be inferred from several passages; let the reader but recall the scene on the cliffs at Dover in 'King Lear,' and the scenes in the first part of 'Henry IV.' which are laid in and about Rochester. As regards the cliffs at Dover, a Miss Pratt has drawn attention to the fact that the watchword 'Sweet marjoram' in 'King Lear,' IV. 6, is not without a meaning, as great quantities of this plant grow between Folkestone and Dover.[1] The poet seems even to have watched the choughs there. That he was intimately acquainted with the neighbourhood of Windsor and the county of Kent is proved by the 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' and the second part of 'Henry IV,' especially II. 7.[2]

Shakespeare, however, does not merely seem to

[1] See J. Roach Smith, The Rural Life of Shakespeare, p. 37 seq. In regard to the choughs, compare the editors on 'King Lear,' IV. 6, and on 'Hamlet,' V. 2.

[2] Compare Knight, William Shakespeare, 365.

have seen the sea from the cliffs at Dover or from other points of the English coast, but various passages in his dramas may well awaken the belief that he was once on board ship. This circumstance, also pointed out by former critics,[1] appears to speak in favour of a longer voyage, and must therefore not be passed over in silence. Nothing is assuredly further from our intention than to make Shakespeare a sailor, and to add another to those numerous professions which, according to the opinions of different biographers, he is said to have followed, but if he really was on board ship, he certainly had his eyes and ears open. The celebrated passage in the introductory scene of the 'Tempest,' shows, as Lord Mulgrave has proved, such an extraordinary and undeniable knowledge of the subject that it cannot have been derived even from the most careful observation of a traveller, but obliges us to suppose that the poet when writing it was assisted by a professional sailor. But it looks very much like personal experience when, in 'Cymbeline,' I. 7, Iachimo says:—

> Sluttery to such neat excellence opposed
> Should make desire vomit emptiness,
> Not so allured to feed.

'No one,' remarks Malone,[2] who has ever been sick at sea, can be at a loss to understand what is meant by vomiting emptiness.' With equal justice he might have said the reverse: 'Those who have never been sick at sea will be at a loss to understand what is meant by vomiting emptiness.' No less suggestive of a voyage

[1] Compare Thoms, Three Notelets, 123.
[2] Supplement, i. 245.

are the comparisons : 'As dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage' in 'As You Like It,' II. 7, and,

> as weeds before
> A vessel under sail, so men obey'd
> And fell below his stem,

in 'Coriolanus,' II. 2. Also the passages in 'Hamlet,' V. 2, 'And yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail,' and 'my sea-gown scarf'd about me,' may be referred to here. The scenes from 'Pericles' already quoted (to which may be added IV. 1), likewise tend to prove that our poet was not wanting in sympathy with, and in the knowledge of life at sea, a point which, in connection with the other indications of a journey of Shakespeare, should by no means be set aside with indifference.

Nevertheless Shakespeare's supposed travels, as things stand, are certainly a matter of belief; except that rational arguments are indispensable to a rational belief, and such in our conviction can be adduced in favour of a journey to Italy, and of that only. Accordingly, English Shakespearean scholars do not regard it with unfavourable eyes, whereas the hypothesis of Shakespeare's visit to Scotland has nowhere met with approbation. Incredulous critics, whose incredulity we do by no means intend to blame, but which they have a right to claim, before rejecting the journey to Italy, ought to refute the arguments which speak in its favour, and to remove by some better means those difficulties which appear to find their simplest and most natural explanation by such a journey.

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT.

(1869.)

SHAKESPEARE, on his annual journeys from London to Stratford, as Anthony Wood relates on the authority of Aubrey, used regularly to lodge at the Crown Tavern, Oxford, kept by John Davenant, the father of the poet.[1] This John Davenant is described as a great patron of the theatre and an admirer of Shakespeare, and his wife as 'a very beautiful woman, of a very good wit, and of conversation extremely agreeable,' to use Aubrey's words. The frequent visits of the poet and the charms of his landlady seem to have given rise to evil reports. Oldys, in repeating Wood's story, adds, on the authority of Betterton and Pope, that 'young William Davenant, at that time a schoolboy of seven or eight years of age, like his father had taken such a fancy to Shakespeare, that whenever he heard of his arrival he would leave school and run home. One day an old burgess seeing him thus running homewards, asked him why he was in such a hurry? The boy answered, to see his godfather Shakespeare. There's a good boy, said the other, but have a care that you don't take God's name in vain.'[2]

[1] Athen. Oxon., ed. Bliss, iii. 802 seqq. Malone's Shakespeare, by Boswell, iii. 278.

[2] Biographia Dramatica, i. 116.

It cannot be denied that this anecdote looks very much like a made-up joke. In no case can Oldys and his authorities be regarded as classical witnesses, Oldys not being born till within the last years of the seventeenth century; moreover we can hardly grant him a higher predicate than that of an undiscerning collector of anecdotes. In regard to Davenant himself, who, at the cost of his mother's honour, is said by Aubrey to have occasionally boasted of his descent from Shakespeare, it is not unlikely that a false vanity may have induced him to attach more importance to an inconsiderate report than it deserved, and that he believed it to be true because he felt himself flattered by it.[1] The story is therefore rejected as utterly unworthy of credit by the 'Biographia Dramatica,' by Dyce, Ulrici, and others. The will of old Davenant,[2] published by Mr. Halliwell, does not throw any light upon this question. Mr. Halliwell, it is true, seeks to establish Mrs. Davenant's innocence because 'her husband alludes to her decease (she died before him) as of one who would otherwise have been a guide to his children, and because there is nothing to show that his affection for William, afterwards Sir William Davenant, was less than that he bore for his other sons.' But if Mrs. Davenant really did have any illicit intercourse with Shakespeare, was it necessary that her husband

[1] Among Davenant's foibles, a desire to disguise his humble origin is apparent; he changed the orthography of his name from Davenant into D'Avenant, in order to give it an air of nobility, for which he had to endure the ridicule of his adversaries.

[2] The Last Will and Testament of John Davenant, Vintner, of the Crown Tavern, Oxford; the house at which Shakespeare lodged in some of his journeys between Stratford-on-Avon and London. Edited by J. O. Halliwell. London, July, 1866 (only 10 copies printed).

should have known of it? Such love affairs are not generally played before the eyes, but behind the backs of husbands. Aubrey, who, according to Mr. Halliwell's own showing, was well informed about the Davenant family, relates: 'Mr. William Shakespeare was wont to go into Warwickshire once a year, and did commonly in his journey lie at this house in Oxon., where he was exceedingly respected. I have heard Parson Robert say, that Mr. W. Shakespeare has given him a hundred kisses.' 'Parson Robert,' continues Mr. Halliwell, 'was the Rev. Robert Davenant, mentioned in this will as a student in the University in the year 1621 or 1622. The anecdote proves that Shakespeare was fond of children, Parson Robert no doubt having been in early youth an engaging boy who had had many a romp with the great dramatist.' It may have been so, but the hundred kisses are certainly surprising, and such tender caresses bestowed upon children are not unfrequently meant for their pretty mothers. At all events the possibility, both external and internal, of a relation between Shakespeare and Mrs. Davenant cannot be denied, and the agreement of Davenant's Christian name with Shakespeare's might even be regarded as a confirmation of it, were it not explained by the fact that in all probability Shakespeare was Davenant's godfather. Even a resemblance between Davenant and Shakespeare has been hinted at in the 'Biographia Dramatica,' but little weight can be attached to this intimation, and the story probably is but one of those numerous reports which, in the course of time, have become linked to Shakespeare's name. Nevertheless we cannot avoid entering our

protest against those biographers who, on principle, would like to clear Shakespeare of all excesses of this kind as if they were mere calumnies, and who, with a strange want of criticism and a wondrous readiness to believe in miracles, seek to represent his marriage as exemplary and one of unclouded happiness; they would even have us believe that Shakespeare took his wife with him to London. Be that as it may, Shakespeare, as far as we know, exercised no other influence either upon Davenant's career or upon his mental development than through his poetry; and Davenant, although he tampered with Shakespeare's plays, throughout life admired and honoured him. His ode, 'In Remembrance of Master William Shakespire' (*sic*) is said to have been composed in his eleventh year (his age at Shakespeare's death).[1] It certainly

[1] This is it:—

Beware, delighted Poets, when you sing
To welcome Nature in the early Spring,
Your numerous feet not tread
The banks of Avon; for each flower
(As it ne'er knew a sun or shower)
Hangs there the pensive head.

Each tree, whose thick and spreading growth hath made
Rather a night beneath the boughs than shade,
(Unwillingly now to grow)
Looks like the plume a captain wears
Whose rifled falls are steep'd i' th' tears
Which from his last rage flow.

The piteous river wept itself away
Long since alas! to such a swift decay,
That reach the map and look,
If you a river there can spy:
And for a river your mock'd eye
Will find a shallow brook.

Davenant's Works (1673) i. 218 seq.

looks like a youthful production, and was at all events one of the earliest expressions of his admiration of Shakespeare. A much more valuable testimony for this admiration we possess in Dryden's preface to his and Davenant's joint alteration of the 'Tempest,' which was written after Davenant's death. 'Sir William Davenant,' says Dryden, 'did me the honour to join me with him in the alteration of this work. It was originally Shakespeare's, a poet for whom he had a particularly high veneration, and whom he first taught me to admire.'

Davenant's father, let him have been whom he may, requires after all to be considered the less, as the son did not take after him, but after his mother. Old John Davenant, in spite of his partiality for the theatre, was a good, modest citizen, gloomy and saturnine, and was never seen to laugh. That he enjoyed the respect of his fellow townsmen is evident from his having been elected mayor in 1621. Mrs. Davenant excelled her husband in sprightliness and mental ability, and the only one of her children who resembled her in this respect was the future poet. Aubrey and Wood relate that William (born in Feb. 1605–6) first attended a private school and afterwards (1621) studied in Lincoln College. At an early age he manifested a liking and talent for poetry; Wood, with an unmistakable allusion to Shakespeare, gives him the poetical epithet of the 'sweet swan of Isis.' This liking for poetry withdrew him from his studies, so that he remained but a short time at Lincoln College, and left it without taking a degree. He then became page to the gay Duchess of Richmond, and soon afterwards obtained a situation

in the household of Sir Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke,[1] after whose death in 1628 he found himself thrown upon his own resources. He now commenced a literary career, and in the following year published three plays, 'Albovine,' 'The Cruel Brother,' and 'The Just Italian,' which were soon followed by other dramas. Whether it was owing to their success, or to the aid of other recommendations and connections, enough, he won the favour of the Court, and seems soon to have been engaged in its services. After Jonson's death in 1637 he was appointed Poet Laureate, with a salary of 100*l.*, but the usual and almost proverbial butt of sack was not granted to him.[2]

Davenant now, as is proved by the commendatory verses prefixed to his various works, as well as by several of his own poems, entered the circle of those royalist poets and authors who surrounded the throne of Charles I., and afterwards of Charles II. Among them we notice Thomas Carew, sewer to King Charles I.; Edmund Waller, previously a partisan of the Parliament, but wavering in his political opinions; William Habington, the author of 'Castara;' Sir John Suckling; Abraham Cowley; John Ogilby, teacher and secretary in Strafford's house, known both by his translations of Æsop, Virgil, and Homer, and by the share which he took in the restoration and coronation of Charles II.; Sir Henry Blount, the well-known traveller; lastly Thomas Hobbes, the Philosopher of

[1] Lord Brooke (born 1554) was an intimate friend of Sir Philip Sidney, and made some attempts in dramatic poetry. Biog. Dram. s. Greville.

[2] Collier, History of English Dramatic Poetry, ii. 73.

Malmesbury. To the latter Davenant addressed the preface of his 'Gondibert.' Sir John Denham nowhere appears among Davenant's friends, at least he never addressed a poem to him, nor did the latter do as much by him; Denham, on the contrary, seems to have had a hand in the satires which were directed against Davenant. Of Davenant's relation to Dryden we shall have to speak below. Among his principal patrons were the Earl of Clarendon, afterwards Lord High Chancellor, to whom he dedicated his 'Siege of Rhodes,' and who has addressed a short eulogy to him on his 'Albovine;' the Earl of Somerset, Lord Jermyn, and Endymion Porter, a chamberlain to King Charles I.

Davenant not only took part in the poetical efforts and political opinions of this circle, but, unfortunately for him, no less in their dissolute life. He was cruelly punished for his 'amorous dalliances' as the 'Biographia Dramatica' delicately expresses it, by the loss of his nose, and this mutilation made him moreover the butt of the wit and derision of his contemporaries. Even Sir John Suckling, who in Aubrey's words 'was his great and intimate friend,' could not refrain from alluding to it in his 'Session of the Poets,' 1637:—

> Will D'Avenant, asham'd of a foolish mischance,
> That he had got lately travelling in France,
> Modestly hop'd the handsomeness of 's Muse
> Might any deformity about him excuse. . . .
> Surely the company would have been content
> If they could have found any precedent;
> But in all their records, in verse or in prose,
> There was not one laureat without a nose.

We learn incidentally from these lines that Davenant had already made a journey to the Continent at this

time.[1] D'Israeli, in his 'Miscellanies,' adduces another epigram, which concludes with the words :—

> Thus Will, intending D'Avenant to grace,
> Has made a notch in 's name like that in 's face.

Davenant was nevertheless vain enough to have himself painted, with his mutilated nose and a laurel wreath upon his high flowing wig, by Greenhill, and to have this painting engraved by Faithorne; the collection of his works published after his death is adorned with this repulsive portrait.

It was very natural that Davenant, by his position both as a courtier and a dramatic poet, should have been drawn into the political troubles of the time. The fanatical attacks of the Puritans upon the theatre drove everything connected with it into the arms of the Court party. Thus it came to pass in 1641 that Davenant was charged by Parliament with having taken part in a conspiracy for raising the army against Parliament. He tried to escape, but was caught, imprisoned, let off on bail, and finally succeeded in escaping to France. He did not obey a summons of Parliament, but in excuse published a pamphlet addressed 'To the Hon. Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses of the House of Commons assembled in Parliament,' 1641. In France we find him among the followers of the exiled Queen Henrietta Maria. His friends Hobbes, Waller, and Suckling had also sought safety in France; the latter, who had been his associate in the alleged conspiracy,

[1] Cibber (Lives of the Poets, s. Davenant) thinks, however, that Suckling introduced France only for the sake of rhyme. According to Aubrey and Wood's statement, the dissolute beauty to whom Davenant owed his misfortune was a handsome black girl in Axe Yard, Westminster.

died in the same year, or the following, at Paris, probably by poison administered by his own hands. Davenant, commissioned by the Queen, returned to England with military stores, joined the royal army, and so distinguished himself in the siege of Gloucester (September, 1643) as lieutenant-general of Artillery that he was knighted in return for his services. Political complications again compelled him to flee to France, where he resumed his confidential position at the court of Henrietta, and joined the Catholic Church. In the meantime he was not idle in the service of the Muses, but commenced his heroic poem 'Gondibert,' the preface of which is dated from the Louvre, January 2, 1650.

After the execution of King Charles, Davenant in 1650, with the Queen's sanction, resolved to emigrate to Virginia at the head of a company of weavers and other mechanics equipped in France. However, the vessel in which they had embarked was captured by a Parliamentary ship of war, and Davenant was thrown into prison a second time. Here, in the castle of Cowes in the Isle of Wight, he worked with undaunted courage at his epic poem 'Gondibert,' although in daily expectation of his sentence of death. Under these trying circumstances he in fact manifested that his was no ordinary mind. In the postscript to the unfinished poem, dated from Cowes Castle, the 22nd of October, 1650, he expresses himself with dignity and equanimity in regard to his position. He writes: 'But 't is high time to strike sail and cast anchor (though I have run but halfe my course) when at the helme I am threatned

with death; who, though he can visit us but once, seems troublesome; and even in the innocent may beget such a gravity, as diverts the musick of verse. And I beseech thee (if thou art so civill as to be pleas'd with what is written) not to take ill, that I run not on till my last gasp. For though I intended in this Poem to strip nature naked, and clothe her again in the perfect shape of Vertue; yet even in so worthy a designe I shall ask leave to desist, when I am interrupted by so great an experiment as dying: and 'tis an experiment to the most experienc'd; for no man (though his mortifications may be much greater then mine) can say, He has already dy'd.'

How it was that Davenant escaped the threatened doom is not exactly known; tradition says that he owed his release from the Tower, to which he was taken from Cowes Castle, to Milton's interposition, in return for which, after the Restoration, he is said to have interceded in behalf of Milton's life. That he should have welcomed the Restoration with great enthusiasm is a matter of course; he praises 'his Excellency the Lord General Monk,' whom he welcomes as a deliverer, with the words:—

> Auspicious Leader! None shall equal thee,
> Who mak'st our Nation and our Language free . . .
> How soon, how boldly, and how safely too,
> Have you dispatcht what not an age could do!

To the same feelings he gives vent in the long-spun poems 'Upon His Sacred Majesty's most happy Return to His Dominions,' and 'To the King's Most Sacred Majesty.' The King to him is the essence of

all virtues, his return is a new era full of happy promise to poetry no less than to the realm.

> From cruel bondage You the Muses free,
> And yet restrain the Poet's liberty;
> But so restrain him that he now does find
> 'Tis but the evil Spirit which You bind.
> The Muse is now, by her conversion, taught
> Gladly to lose that freedom which she sought:
> How wild her flights have been until restrain'd,
> And, by Your power, how greatly has she gain'd!
> By bad Ideas she did Heroes paint,
> But now, You of a Muse have form'd a Saint.[1]

For Davenant personally the Restoration had the pleasant effect of granting him a suitable sphere of action, so that he could spend his latter years in congenial activity, and in a position free from cares. After having alternately been a courtier, a politician, an exile, a captain in the Artillery, and a state prisoner, he ended his career as manager of a theatre. He died on the 17th of April 1668, and was interred in Westminster Abbey.[2] The inscription on his tombstone, 'O rare Sir William Davenant,' was an imitation of Ben Jonson's epitaph, and in spite of ridicule called forth by his vanity, his love of money, and other weaknesses, he

[1] Works, i. 255, 268.

[2] 'I up and down,' relates Pepys, 'to the Duke of York's playhouse, there to see, which I did, Sir W. Davenant's corps carried out towards Westminster, there to be buried. Here were many coaches and six horses, and many hacknies, that made it look, methought, as if it were the buriall of a poor poet. He seemed to have many children, by five or six in the first mourning coach, all boys.' Pepys' Diary, April 9, 1668. Aubrey, who was also at the funeral, says that Davenant had a coffin of walnut tree, and that Sir John Denham declared it to be the finest coffin he ever saw. Malone's Shakespeare, by Boswell, iii. 283. Davenant was twice married. His first wife died on March 6, 1654–5; his second (who in 1673 published his works), survived till February 24, 1690–1. See The Gentleman's Magazine, October 1850, p. 367. Notes and Queries, March 5, 1870, p. 248.

carried the esteem and admiration of his foremost contemporaries with him to his grave. The 'Biographia Dramatica' says that 'honour, courage, gratitude, integrity, and vivacity were the predominant features of his mind.' His poetic talent is most favourably judged by Dryden in his preface to the 'Tempest.' 'I found him,' he says, 'of so quick a fancy, that nothing was proposed to him on which he could not quickly produce a thought extremely pleasant and surprising; and those first thoughts of his, contrary to the old Latin proverb, were not always the least happy; and as his fancy was quick, so likewise were the products of it remote and new. He borrowed not of any other, and his imaginations were such as could not easily enter into any other man. His corrections are sober and judicious, and he corrected his own writings much more severely than those of another man, bestowing twice the labour and pains in polishing which he used in invention.' Very different indeed is Richard Flecknoe's criticism, in his pamphlet 'Sir William Davenant's Voyage to the other World' (1668), in which both Davenant's person and his poetry are ridiculed. Flecknoe relates that on Davenant's arrival in Elysium, the poets assembled there kept back; 'nay even Shakespeare,' he continues, 'whom he thought to have found his greatest friend, was as much offended with him as any of the rest, for so spoyling and mangling of his plays. But he who most vext and tormented him was his old antagonist Jack Donn, who mock'd him with an hundred passages out of "Gondibert," and after a world of other railing and spightful language (at which the Doctor was excellent), so exasperated the Knight at

last, as they fell together by the ears, when but imagine

> What tearing Noses had been there,
> Had they but Noses for to tear.'[1]

D'Israeli praises 'Gondibert' as Davenant's principal work, and as a lasting monument of genius. Davenant, he thinks, possessed as lofty a mind as Milton and Tasso, and it was only owing to the malignant ridicule of the would-be-witty critics that this great poem remained a torso.[2] Still the defects of the poem far outweigh its excellences. Instinctively conscious of having missed the epic tone and character, Davenant called his poem heroic, not epic, and after the analogy of the five-act drama, divided it into five parts. 'He did not wish to be a coaster,' as he says in his preface to his much-honoured friend Mr. Hobbes, 'who never loses the wonted sea-marks out of sight, but he had the ambition of discoverers, that love to sail in untried seas.' But he did not succeed in enriching the domain of poetry by a new discovery. The subject is without interest; it lacks an historical foundation on the one hand, and supernatural machinery on the other. Upon the absence of the latter, which indeed is not an absolute requisite of a modern epic poem, Davenant

[1] Malone's Shakespeare, by Boswell (1821), iii. 284 seqq.

[2] D'Israeli alludes to 'Certain Verses written by several of the Author's friends, to be reprinted in the second edition of "Gondibert"' (1653), and 'The Incomparable Poem of Gondibert vindicated from the Wit-Combats of Four Esquires, Clinias, Dametas, Sancho, and Jack-Pudding' (1655). Even Scott, in his 'Life of Dryden,' agrees with the rather superficial opinion that Gondibert fell a victim to the sarcasms of critics. The witticisms of reviewers, mischievous as they are, cannot, however, suppress a truly great work.

prided himself, and Waller praises it in the following lines :—

> Here no bold tales of gods or monsters swell,
> But human passions such as with us dwell ;
> Man is thy theme, his virtue or his rage,
> Drawn to the life in each elaborate page.

The narrative is diffuse, the action without unity, the events are complicated, and the language often obscure. Instead of naïve perception and lofty inspiration, we find reflection and elegant phraseology, nay even epigrammatic turns, upon which D'Israeli, strangely enough, bestows especial praise, and designates the poet as a poetical Rochefoucault. The metre also is unhappily chosen, as the four-lined stanza is stiff and wearisome, and leaves no room for the flow of the narrative or for the minuteness of description, such as is offered by the hexameter, the blank verse, or by the ottava rima. Davenant in his preface considers it an advantage of this metre, that the end of each stanza requires a pause or conclusion to the thought, that the alternate rhyme is suited to stately music, and that the shortness of the stanza makes it more convenient to the singer. If only the contents were in any way singable! Dryden has adopted the same stanza in his 'Annus Mirabilis,' and has set forth its merits (especially if compared to the heroic couplet), in his introductory letter to Sir Robert Howard. In spite of all this, it is and remains a mistake.[1] A poem such as this, celebrating the heroic deeds of fabulous Longobard princes, could not possibly excite sympathy in the mind and feelings of the age, when king and people were

[1] See Scott, Life of Dryden, sect. 1.

engaged in a struggle for political supremacy; for the time of Charles II. it was moreover too serious and virtuous. Hence it has been justly condemned by most critics, and been ridiculed by satirists (for instance by Butler, in his Hudibras, Part I., Canto 2, verses 379–409).[1]

It cannot be doubted that Davenant's chief merit and literary importance lies in his dramatic poetry, and still more so in his activity as a manager. He as it were forms the bridge between the Shakespearean popular theatre and the Frenchified Court theatre which made its appearance with the Restoration; it was he who introduced scenery and music upon the English stage. We shall have to discuss this last point somewhat more at length, as the transition from the popular to the Court theatre was in a great measure owing to the development of scenic or decorative appurtenances. Mr. Collier, iii. 366, says: 'The introduction of scenery gives the date to the commencement of the decline of our dramatic poetry.' It is well known in what chaste simplicity, or, in the opinion of others, in what beggarly poverty, Shakespeare's stage lagged behind the marvellous growth of his poetry. In fact the dramatic poem was everything; it was neither supported nor disturbed by those theatrical contrivances which in our day have attained such an extraordinary development that they threaten to subvert the real object of the theatre. The minds of the people fortunately possessed such a highly poetic susceptibility that they did not require the external decoration of the

[1] Hallam, Introd. Lit. Eur., iii. 36 sq. Retrospective Review (London, 1820), ii. 304-324.

stage, at least they did not miss it.[1] In Shakespeare's open theatre the acting was done by daylight, the artificial illumination being first introduced in the smaller and so-called private theatres. With the exception of the well-known balcony at the back of the stage, which could be concealed by a traverse, and some trees, pieces of rock, tombstones, and trap-doors, there was no movable scenery. In order to indicate the place where the scene of a play was laid, a board was hung up upon which the name of the place was inscribed.[2] The same was done with the title of the play. The freedom of the change of scene in Shakespeare's plays which modern managers and spectators often find troublesome, would have been impossible if it had had each time to be expressed by a change in decoration. The stage was covered with rushes, and on extraordinary occasions with a carpet; the walls also, which were subsequently painted, were hung with cloth or tapestry. The curtain ran upon an iron rod and was pulled apart from both sides, till this primitive apparatus was improved after the Restoration.[3]

It was not the people but the Court which first took offence at the defects of this stage arrangement. And because the Court, like the Mountain in the oriental legend, could not come to Mohammed, Mohammed, i.e. the theatre, had to go to the Court, and like everything that approached it, had to decorate itself to the best of

[1] See Chorus to 'King Henry V.'

[2] In Davenant's 'Siege of Rhodes,' and his 'History of Sir Francis Drake,' two pillars were erected in front of the stage, which supported a frieze, in the centre of which the names of 'Rhodes' and 'Peru' were written upon a shield.

[3] Collier, History of English Dramatic Poetry, iii. 353-376.

its abilities. As early as the sixth decade of the sixteenth century there were performances at Court in which some endeavours were made to develop theatrical splendour and to aid the illusion by mechanical contrivances and decorations. These endeavours rose highest in the masques, from reasons which have been explained in the Essay on the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream.' The art of the poet accordingly consisted to a great degree in the invention and skilful employment of splendid and surprising scenic decorations, and it is in this respect that B. Jonson has done the utmost. But to execute and supplement his inventions he required a no less ingenious mechanician, one who would partly excite his own ideas and partly carry them out. This man he found in Inigo Jones.[1]

Inigo Jones (1573–1652) was descended from a Catholic family belonging to the artisan class, and had grown up in poor circumstances. Supported probably by some noble patron, he spent some time in Italy, chiefly in Venice, for the purpose of completing his artistic education. He then entered the service of Christian IV. of Denmark (he is said to have assisted in building part of the castle of Fredericksborg), but returned to his native country about the year 1604. Recommended, as it is to be presumed, to Queen Anne by her royal brother, he was appointed Surveyor of the Prince's Works, and after the Prince's death, Surveyor of his Majesty's Works. The first masque

[1] Inigo Jones. A Life of the Architect, by Peter Cunningham, Esq. Remarks on some of his Sketches for Masques and Dramas, by J. R. Planché, Esq., and Five Court Masques, ed. from the original MSS. of Ben Jonson, John Marston, &c., by John P. Collier, Esq. London, 1848. Printed for the Shakespeare Society.

represented according to his 'design and act,'[1] was Jonson's 'Masque of Blackness' (in Whitehall on Twelfth Night, 1605), the idea of which had originated with the Queen herself. Jonson, it is known, has furnished this, and all of his masques, not only with numerous notes, but also with a detailed description of what he calls 'the bodily part.' The costs amounted to the enormous sum of 10,000*l.*, according to the present value of money, but that its success must have been most complete may be concluded from the fact that Jones was summoned to Oxford as early as August of the same year, in order to 'embody' three pieces (not masques) which were to be played in the hall of Christ Church before the King. 'The stage,' says a contemporaneous account, 'was built close to the upper end of the hall, as it seemed at the first sight: but indeed it was but a false wall, faire painted and adorned with stately pillars, which pillars would turn about; by reason whereof, with the help of other painted cloths, the stage did vary three times in the acting of one tragedy.' This innovation, however, seems to have pleased classic Oxford less than the worldly-minded Court; at least the same author adds in plain words that Mr. Jones but little fulfilled the expectations entertained of him, though he received 50*l.* for his exertions. All the more unanimous was the approbation gained in the following year by the splendid 'Masque of Hymen,' which Jonson and Jones brought out for the marriage of the Earl of Essex with Frances Howard. The

[1] Jones also used to design the costumes, and an interesting collection of his sketches for costumes is preserved in the Duke of Devonshire's library.

poet on this occasion condescended to assist in turning a globe in which the maskers were seated, and which was so contrived that it 'stood or rather hung, for no axle was seen to support it.' In the 'Masque of Queens' (1609) mention is made also of music and dance, the former composed by Master Alphonso Ferrabosco, the latter invented and taught by Master Thomas Giles.[1] This statement is in so far important and interesting as it shows that Jonson did not only introduce decorations from Italy, but music as well. Ferrabosco also composed the music to Jonson's 'Hue and Cry after Cupid,' and is duly praised by the grateful poet in two of his epigrams. Two other celebrated composers of masques, the brothers Henry and William Lawes, had, like their master Giovanni Coperario (John Cooper), undoubtedly been trained in the Italian school.

After Jones and Jonson had produced a series of splendid masques, a dispute arose between them, which was indeed settled for a time, but not long afterwards broke out afresh and raged the fiercer, without our hearing of a final reconciliation. Jonson repeatedly launched the most bitter invectives at the man who for many years had been his much-praised collaborateur. This he did not only in his conversations with Drummond of Hawthornden, but publicly also, in his 'Expostulation with Inigo Jones,' and in various epigrams; he even brought him upon the stage in two masques, in 'Love's Welcome' (1634), as Iniquo Vitruvius, and in 'A Tale of a Tub' (1633), under the designation of

[1] Cunningham, p. 7, erroneously refers this statement concerning the composer and ballet-master to the 'Masque of Hymen.'

Vitruvius Hoop. Jones, indeed, contrived that the Master of the Revels should be commanded to strike out the last-mentioned character, it being personally offensive, but Jonson nevertheless smuggled his adversary in again as 'In-and-In Medlay, of Islington, Cooper and Headborough.' The accounts of the origin of these quarrels are not very clear; at all events deep-rooted jealousy must have been at the bottom of them. Jonson felt himself too much the poet patiently to submit to poetry becoming subservient to decorative art. 'Painting and carpentry are the soul of Masque,' he exclaims bitterly. He found himself pushed completely into the shade, especially since he had become old and out of fashion. He was to be nothing but a manufacturer of librettos, and Jones in every respect to carry off the lion's share, both of honour and payment.[1] Inigo's name had always to be placed first on the title-page, and when once, in the case of 'Chloridia,' Jonson acted differently, Inigo felt himself so aggrieved that he exerted all his interest to supplant the poet and his librettos. Jonson has drawn a lively and certainly not untruthful picture of the whole affair in the fifth act of 'A Tale of a Tub,' where Squire Tub wishes to have a masque represented and looks about for a proper person to make one. 'Can any man make a masque here in this company?' he exclaims, and Clench answers:—

> There stands the man can do 't, sir;
> Medlay the joiner, In-and-In of Islington,
> The only man at a disguise in Middlesex.
> *Squire Tub.* But who shall write it?

[1] 'Thy twice-conceived, thrice-paid for imagery,' says Jonson.

Hilts. Scriben, the great writer.
Scriben. He'll do 't alone, sir; he will join with no man,
Though he be a joiner, in design he calls it,
He must be sole inventer. In-and-In
Draws with no other in 's project, he will tell you,
It cannot else be feasible or conduce:
Those are his ruling words; please you to hear 'un?

After In-and-In's favourite expressions, *feasible* and *conduce*, have been still further ridiculed, Clench continues:—

It will be glorious
If In-and-In will undertake it, sir:
He has a monstrous Medlay-wit of his own.
Tub. Spare for no cost, either in boards or hoops,
To architect your tub: have you ne'er a cooper,
At London, call'd Vitruvius? send for him;
Or old John Heywood, call him to you, to help.
Scriben. He scorns the motion, trust to him alone.

Jones now joined other poets, who, though less distinguished, were more tractable and submitted to him without opposition, such as Townshend, Carew, Shirley, Th. Heywood, and Davenant. Only one of them, Carew, once ventured, after the precedent of Jonson, to place the poet's name first on the title-page, which very possibly may have raised Inigo's anger against him too. That these writers of librettos never dared to omit some gentle praise of Inigo, is a matter of course; we must, however, be grateful for these encomiums on the encroaching architect, as they serve to increase our scanty knowledge of the development of scenic decorations. Thus, for instance, Th. Heywood, in the preface to 'Love's Mistress' (1636), says: 'I cannot pretermit to give a due character to that admirable artist, Mr. Inigo Jones, Master Surveyor of the King's Works, etc., who to every act, nay almost to every

scene, by his excellent inuentions, gave such an extraordinary lustre; upon every occasion changing the stage to the admiration of all the spectators, that, as I must ingeniously confesse it was above my apprehension to conceive, so to their sacred Majesties and the rest of the auditory it gave so generall a content, that I presume they never parted from any object presented in that kind better pleased or more plenally satisfied.' Indeed this masque was received with such extraordinary applause that it had to be repeated publicly in the Cockpit (a so-called private theatre).[1]

We cannot ascertain the exact date of Inigo's first connection with Davenant. In all probability 'The Temple of Love,' a masque presented by the Queen's Majesty and her ladies at Whitehall on Shrove Tuesday, 1634, was the first play that they produced conjointly. This was followed by 'The Triumphs of the Prince D'Amour,' represented in the Middle Temple, Feb. 24, 1635, in which, however, it is not certain whether Jones had a hand or not. In Davenant's third and fourth masques[2] Jones again as usual occupies the first place on the title-page; the third masque was, 'Britannia Triumphans,' personated by the King and his gentlemen on the Sunday after Twelfth Night, 1637; the fourth was, 'Salmacida Spolia,' acted at Whitehall by both their Majesties on Jan. 21st, 1639.

Through his connection with Jones, Davenant, as it

[1] The Old English Drama, London, 1825, ii. p. 15.

[2] These two last masques are not included in the collection of Davenant's Works. The separate edition of 'Britannia Triumphans,' it is supposed, was suppressed by the Puritans, because of the mention on the title-page that it had been played on a Sunday, which gave them great offence. Mr. Collier, ii. 80, however, is of a different opinion.

seems, became even more firmly established in the favour of the Court, and was thus induced to aspire at a higher aim than to be the libretto writer to the Surveyor of his Majesty's Works. In the same year in which the last-named masque was represented, Davenant obtained a patent for erecting a new theatre in the city (close by Fleet Street, in the parish of St. Dunstan's), which was to be 120 feet square, and to surpass in size all theatres London had ever possessed.[1] Whether, however, he could not come to an agreement with the owner of the land, Lord Arundel, as Chalmers conjectures,[2] or that the Puritanical influences and the objections of the City magistrates were insurmountable, Davenant in the same year had to renounce the privilege granted to him, because, as the indenture by which he yielded his right expresses it, it had not been his Majesty's meaning that the new theatre should be erected in an inconvenient place, and the said parcel of ground had since been found to be inconvenient and unfit for the purpose. Perhaps it was by way of compensation that Davenant in the following year (June 27th, 1640), was appointed governor of the King's and Queen's company who acted in the Cockpit, after the late governor, William Beeston, had been removed on account of the performance of an unlicensed play and some other disorders that had been committed among the players. In the patent, printed by Mr. Collier (ii. 101), Davenant is indeed styled 'gentleman,' but at the same time 'one of her Majesty's servants,' which seems to show that he must himself have appeared

[1] Collier, History of English Dramatic Poetry, ii. 90 seqq.
[2] Suppl. Apol., 187.

on the stage about this time. His career as governor of the Cockpit Theatre was, however, cut short by his partaking in the above-mentioned conspiracy, which took place in the year 1641, and compelled him to flee to France.

After his release from the Tower, Davenant, utterly disgusted with politics, returned to his theatrical plans. However puzzling and strange it may seem, Davenant, the favourite and zealous partisan of the Court, who had narrowly escaped death on political grounds, obtained from the Commonwealth the permission to give theatrical representations. Perhaps the only means of explaining this singular fact is that Davenant had secured the protection of influential patrons, and that he went cautiously and discreetly to work; it may also be submitted that the fanaticism of the Puritans had by this time somewhat abated, and that the stage was evidently too much a national affair for the bulk of the people to bear its abolition by that tyrannical sect otherwise than with indignation and disapproval. According to the 'Biographia Dramatica,' it was chiefly owing to the support of Lord Whitelock and Sir John Maynard that Davenant was allowed to open a small theatre in Rutland House, in Charterhouse Yard. Unfortunately we are not informed of the date, but it must have happened between 1652–1656, that is, 10–14 years after the nominal closing of the theatres (1642). Their actual suppression cannot be said to have taken place until 1647, although even after this time private representations still occurred in London and in the provinces, so that the real interruption was confined to a period of a few years. Davenant was prudent

enough not to provoke the Puritans by representing actual dramas, but after having prepared his public by a so-called entertainment, he gave operas. This entertainment is entitled 'The First Day's Entertainment at Rutland House, by Declamations and Music after the Manner of the Ancients.'[1] It is a strange mixture of long-winded, prosaic declamations, songs, and instrumental music. The prologue is followed by a 'consort (concert) of instrumental music,' adapted to the sullen character of Diogenes. The curtain rises and reveals the cynic Diogenes and the poet Aristophanes, sitting upon gilt rostra, and declaiming the one against, and the other in favour of public entertainment by 'moral representations.' Diogenes in a disguised manner represents the Puritan party. The reply of Aristophanes is likewise introduced by a concert 'befitting the pleasant disposition of Aristophanes.' At the head of his arguments he places the practice of virtue, which is promoted by the introduction of heroes and their deeds; the Muses, he says, are the lovely attendants of Lady Virtue. Public representations, moreover, are said to serve for the diffusion of 'civility.' Music and scenery, in his opinion, are by no means useless or even injurious, as Diogenes will have it; in fact, it is the safest and shortest way to assist the understanding when large seas and provinces, fleets, armies, and fortresses are to be seen without our encountering the dangers of a sea voyage or the toils of a long journey. Besides, he says, there is no deception if the audience is prepared and willing to be de-

[1] The separate edition appeared in 1657.

ceived, and he who will not be pleased with the sight of woods and meadows which he can never possess, may just as well shut up the windows of his house and live in the dark. That the display and embellishments demanded by public assemblies and entertainments are not sinful is shown by the fact that we are taught to use them by Nature, who never errs, and who gives us a model in the gay and splendid decorations of birds and flowers. This speech is again followed by vocal and instrumental music, the last passage of which, given in the French style, serves as an introduction to a second disputation between a Parisian and a Londoner, who now ascend the rostra. The Parisian maintains the cosmopolitan standpoint, and declares it to be the most palpable sign of a narrow-minded education that the universal blood-relationship of humanity should be torn asunder by rivers or seas. He then finds fault with the style of architecture in London, the disorder in the streets, the bad arrangement of the houses and the life of its inhabitants, whereas he extols Paris, which he calls the school of Europe. The Londoner, whose speech is introduced by a piece of music in the style of the Waits of London, vindicates his native city and shows the dark sides of the French metropolis and its inhabitants. Instrumental and vocal music follows again, and a short epilogue concludes the whole. How far this strange and—in regard to the text—dry production, could be said to be written 'after the manner of the ancients,' does not appear.

Among the operas which Davenant gave in Rutland House were his 'Siege of Rhodes,' the first part of

which had already appeared in 1656,[1] and his operatic ballet, 'The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru,' which appeared in 1658. Perhaps it is one of these two operas (probably the former), which Evelyn saw acted in 1658. 'I went,' he says, 'to see a new opera, after the Italian way, in recitative music and scenes, much inferior to the Italian composure and magnificence; but it was prodigious that in a time of such public consternation such a vanity should be kept up or permitted. I being engaged with company, could not decently resist the going to see it, though my heart smote me for it.' These words at the same time give us an insight into the various currents of public opinion. In spite of the 'public consternation' Davenant's speculation seems to have been successful; it at least placed him in a position to proceed gradually to the performance of actual dramas. For however much he speaks in behalf of the opera, still he seems to have regarded it only as a transition stage, as a bridge to the drama. It is a further proof of the irrepressible love of the London public for the theatre, that Davenant's example was imitated even during the Commonwealth. In the year 1659, after the death of the Protector, the bookseller Rhodes, who before the revolution had been wardrobe-keeper in Blackfriars Theatre, received permission to give regular representations in the Cockpit, Drury Lane, and formed a company which, among

[1] The second part was probably first performed at the Duke's Theatre, although the end of the prologue, where the smallness of the stage is complained of, seems to point to Rutland House. But even the Duke's Theatre was not large (for which reason Davenant, shortly before his death, exchanged it for Dorset Gardens), and the epilogue proves that this second part must be assigned to Davenant's latter years.

others, was joined by young Betterton. Besides plays by Beaumont, Fletcher,[1] and others, some of Davenant's operas were given there, for instance, 'The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru,' already spoken of, and 'The History of Sir Francis Drake,' both of which Davenant subsequently inserted into his 'Playhouse to be Let.' Both pieces were played daily in the Cockpit 'punctually at three o'clock in the afternoon.'

The Restoration brought with it freedom to the stage, if to nothing else, and two theatres were immediately licensed, one in Drury Lane, to Henry Killigrew, and the other in Lincoln's Inn Fields, to Davenant. The latter engaged the company of the Cockpit,[2] of which Betterton had by this time distinguished himself as the most prominent member, and opened his new theatre called, after the Duke of York, the 'Duke's Theatre,' with his remodelled opera, 'The Siege of Rhodes' (1662), which appeared complete in the following year. In the dedication to Lord Chancellor Clarendon, the poet complains of the continued persecution of dramatic poetry. 'It proceeds from the same mind not to be pleas'd with Princes on the stage and not to affect them in the Throne; for those are ever most inclin'd to break the Mirrour who are unwilling to see the Images of such as have just authority over their guilt. In old Rome the Magistrates did not only protect but exhibit Plays; and not long since the two wise Cardinals did kindly entertain the great Images

[1] It may be presumed that 'The Woman Hater,' to which Davenant wrote a prologue, was one of them. Davenant's Works, i. 239.

[2] According to the 'History of English Dramatic Poetry,' iii. 332, Davenant's company likewise acted at the Cockpit until they removed to their new theatre in the spring of 1662.

represented in tragedy by Monsieur Corneille.' At the same time Davenant sets forth his own endeavours to raise the theatre. 'As others have purg'd the Stage from corruptions of the Art of the Drama, so I have endeavour'd to cleanse it from the corruption of manners; nor have I wanted care to render the Ideas of Greatness and Vertue pleasing and familiar.' It is just as if we were listening to the discourse of a French academician.

In fact, Davenant, during his stay in France, had become thoroughly acquainted with the French stage, and had imbibed a goodly portion of its spirit. It was just the time when Corneille had raised the French drama to the height of its classic period,[1] and when Molière began his career. It is well known that the French court protected and supported the theatre, and gave it a more respectable standing. Even Cardinal Richelieu condescended to occupy himself with dramatic poetry as a recreation from state business, and set young poets, under his supervision, to shape his dramatic ideas.[2] The elegance and refinement of the Hôtel de Rambouillet cast a reflex on the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and the theatrical company of the latter was far more desirous of pleasing the court and the nobility than the public. The notions, impressions, and improvements of this French theatrical world were imported to England by Davenant, who especi-

[1] 'Medée,' 1635; 'Cid,' 1636; 'Horace' and 'Cinna,' 1639; 'Polyeucte,' 1640; 'Le Menteur,' 1642; 'Rodogune,' 1644. That Corneille must have met with immediate applause in England is shown by Edm. Waller's translation of the first act of his 'Pompée.' The Works of Edmund Waller, published by Fenton, London, 1744, p. 243 and clxiii.

[2] Demogeot, Histoire de la littérature Française (1862), 373.

ally endeavoured to blend the French stage arrangements, which were far in advance of the English, with those of the English masque, and to reconstruct his stage out of these two elements, for which purpose he above all introduced moveable scenery.[1] In his endeavours he was assisted by Thomas Betterton, who, according to Cibber, was sent to Paris by King Charles in order to make himself acquainted with the arrangements of the French stage, and to transfer them to the English theatre.[2] Many years had indeed elapsed since Davenant's sojourn there, and the French stage must certainly have made considerable progress in the meantime. As a notable improvement introduced from France by Davenant it may be mentioned that he placed the band between the audience and the stage, which seems to have been done for the first time when Shakespeare's 'Tempest,' as altered by Dryden and Davenant, was played at the Duke's Theatre in 1667.[3] The most important innovation, however, which no doubt was also due to Davenant's theatre, was the transference of female parts to actresses. As early as the year 1629 a French company in London had made the attempt to introduce female performers, but this unwonted sight incurred the greatest displeasure

[1] Malone's Shakespeare, by Boswell, iii. 257 seqq. Compare Pepys' Diary, under the date of August 15, 1661. 'To the opera,' says the celebrated diarist, 'which begins again to-day with "The Witts," never acted yet with scenes; indeed it is a most excellent play and admirable scenes.'

[2] Lives of the Poets, s. Betterton. After the theatre in Drury Lane was burnt down in January 1671–2, the two governors, Hart and Killigrew, sent the distinguished actor Hayns to Paris, to examine the machinery employed in the French operas. Malone's Shakespeare, by Boswell, iii. 289.

[3] History of English Dramatic Poetry, iii. 448.

among the English public. The poor actresses were hissed and hooted as if they had been the most disreputable and shameless women.[1] According to a remark in Jordan's 'Royal Arbor of Loyal Poesie,' an English actress appeared on the stage for the first time in 1663, in Shakespeare's 'Othello.'[2] Betterton in 1670 married an actress, Mrs. Saunderson, who belonged to the same company with himself, that is, the one that had before belonged to Davenant. He and his wife deservedly enjoyed great esteem in private life no less than on the stage, and their married life, which lasted forty years, was a happy and exemplary one.[3] Betterton was allowed a burial in Westminster Abbey (1710), and his widow subsequently received a pension of 100*l.* from Queen Anne. Such was the change of public opinion in regard to the social position of actors and actresses.

After this glance at the outward circumstances of the theatre arises the question what was Davenant's position as a dramatic poet in his relation to Shakespeare and his theatre on the one hand, and to the French drama on the other. He differed from Shakespeare in the first place in his fundamental notion of the nature of dramatic poetry; he did not consider its object to lie in holding up a mirror to nature, but, as is evident from the various passages referred to, in

[1] Collier, ii. 22 sqq. As late as 1660 young Kynaston acted female parts in Davenant's theatre. 'Captain Ferrers took me to the Cockpit play, "The Loyall Subject," where one Kinaston, a boy, acted the Duke's sister, but made the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life.' Pepys' Diary, August 18, 1660.

[2] The Athenæum, 1857, i. 439.

[3] Biog. Dramat., s. Betterton.

promoting virtue and moral refinement by the representation of heroic examples. He repeatedly lays the greatest stress upon 'moral representations,' and his poetry in so far has a tendency. It may, perhaps, be imagined that he required a pretext like this to reconcile the Puritans to his attempts at reviving the theatre which they had suppressed, but the moralising tendency was in his blood, although it cannot be denied that these circumstances may have favoured it. One of his earliest plays, the tragi-comedy, 'The Just Italian' (which appeared in 1630), is praised by William Hopkins as 'a legitimate poem,' in opposition to the pleasures of Paris Garden; and Thomas Carew contrasts it to the popular theatre, 'that adulterate stage,' and praises Beaumont and 'great Jonson,' without mentioning Shakespeare. Both of them evidently intend thus to console Davenant for the failure of his play.[1] In Davenant's eyes the drama was only to represent the highest social life, and overstrained morals and court etiquette were to be introduced upon the stage. He found these things better ordered in France than at home. The French drama, however, was greatly influenced by the novels of Calprenède and Scudéri, both of them also widely read in England, which contain nothing but 'unnatural representations of the passions, false sentiments, false precepts, false wit, false honour, and false modesty, with a heap of improbable, unnatural incidents, mixed up with true history, and fastened upon some of the great names of antiquity.' 'Every king,' says Sir Walter Scott, was by prescriptive right a hero, every female a goddess, every

[1] Davenant's Works, ii. 441 seqq.

tyrant a fire-breathing chimera, and every soldier an irresistible Amadis.'[1] This is the starting point of the erroneous way entered upon by the classic court drama, both in England and in France; from this all the defects of the characterisation, of the motives, and of the composition in general proceeded. In Shakespeare, action and conflict arise out of the inmost soul of the individual, out of the natural disposition of his mind, the peculiarities of his character and his passions, but in Davenant, individualisation gives place to typical characteristics which found their highest development in the French drama. In addition to this, the action is influenced and the conflict produced by circumstances which are beyond the control of the persons acting. Occurrence imperceptibly takes the place of action. The influence of such outward occurrences upon the composition is the characteristic sign of the decline of art; it is most closely connected with the development of the external theatrical resources, decoration and machinery.[2] This kind of composition and characterisation at the same time requires far less intuition on the part of the poet; it is the work of talent not of genius. Davenant, like all the rest of that school, was not concerned in representing men as they really are; he intends his characters to be above all things noble, great,

[1] Scott, Life of Dryden, sect. 2. Compare Hallam, Introd. Lit. Eur., iii. 518 seqq.

[2] 'Sedulous study, deep reflection, and long and repeated correction and revision were not to be expected from a playwright by whom three dramas were to be produced in one season; and in their place were substituted adventures, surprises, rencontres, mistakes, disguises, and escapes, all readily accomplished by the intervention of sliding panels, closets, veils, masks, large cloaks, and dark lanterns.' Scott, Life of Dryden, sect. 2.

and heroic, which to him was the *conditio sine qua non* of their admission to the stage. Their faults were only to serve as foils to their virtues, in the same way as shade is necessary to give light its full effect. This very naturally gave rise to high-flown and sententious declamations, to the pompousness of hollow feeling, to bombast instead of sublimity. Davenant, it is true, did not reach the height of this style; this was reserved for his younger friend, Dryden, for whose heroic plays he paved the way, as Dryden himself admits in his 'Essay on Heroic Plays.' His dramas, with the exception of the operas and some few pathetic scenes, are not yet written in rhymed couplets, but either in prose or in the blank verse imitated from Shakespeare. Like Shakespeare he has interspersed the latter not only with shorter or longer lines, but also with prose, and in his tragi-comedies has retained the mixture of the tragic and the comic. In several plays he more or less strictly observes the unities, as, for instance, in 'The Man's the Master,' borrowed from Scarron, where it is expressly stated that the scene is Madrid, and 'in one house.' Dryden, in 'All for Love' (1678), has entirely submitted to the three unities. That the limitation of locality was rendered necessary by the introduction of moveable scenery has been said before; for although the latter did not necessitate the absolute unity of place, yet it was not capable of following the unlimited change of scene.

By way of example let us examine the tragi-comedy 'Love and Honour' (the two pivots of the classic court-drama). The inhabitants of Savoy have routed the Milanese—why they have been at war

with one another we are not told—and are preparing for a happy return home. Rich booty and numerous prisoners of war are carried to Turin; among the latter is a number of women, the most conspicuous of whom is Evandra, the daughter and heiress of the Duke of Milan, who has been captured by the young and valiant Count Prospero. Prospero, however, on account of this capture, incurs the severe reproaches of his friend Alvaro, son of the Duke of Savoy, who informs him that many years ago his father's brother has been taken prisoner and executed by the Duke of Milan, and that therefore his father will no doubt cruelly revenge himself upon Evandra. Prospero regrets his mistake, which threatens to deprive him of the prince's favour; but as it is too late to restore the fair princess to her family, he conceals her in a subterraneous vault in his house, which is unknown to everybody except himself. On the return of the army the Duke of Savoy issues an edict that, after the lapse of a year, all female prisoners shall be at liberty to return to Milan without ransom, if, up to that time, they have not consented to marry their conquerors, who are meanwhile to provide for them. Evandra alone, of whose arrival the Duke has heard in spite of every precaution, is not included in this number, but is to suffer immediate death as soon as found. When Prospero refuses to disclose her place of concealment he is sentenced to be executed on the following morning; Alvaro, however, who in the meantime has seen Evandra and become enamoured of her, intercedes for his friend, and is willing to take his father's anger to himself. Prospero, too, has fallen in love with Evandra, and so has Leonel, Prince of Parma, who like

her has been brought to Turin as a prisoner of war. All these lovers visit Evandra in Prospero's house without showing a trace of jealousy. Prospero and Alvaro dispute with each other for the honour and happiness of dying for Evandra; one outbids the other in generosity and in the readiness to sacrifice himself, and such is their heroism that not even in a word they betray love of life or regret to leave the world. They are, however, surpassed by Evandra, who, with the assistance of her companion Melora (Leonel's sister, also a prisoner of war), locks them up in her grotto in order to save them. She then intends to deliver herself up to the Duke, but Melora is beforehand with her, and represents herself as Evandra. The contention of the lovers is now renewed between the girls, each one wishing to die for the other. They face death with greater equanimity than if they were going to a ball; they think of nothing but the heroic deed which they are about to accomplish, and of the renown which they will gain by it. This heroism on the part of the women, however, does not make the Duke swerve from his vow of revenge, any more than that of their lovers, or the ransom offered by Milan. Unable to find out the real Evandra, the Duke orders both girls to be put to death. At the last moment, Alvaro, Prospero, and their friends, propose to rescue the poor martyrs by force, but do nothing for the execution of such a plan. Leonel now discovers himself to be a son of that Duke of Parma who, while in the service of Milan, has taken the Duke of Savoy's brother prisoner; he thus attains his object of setting the girls free, and is now to die in their stead. How is all this to end?

How can it end but by a *deus ex machina*? When the execution is just about to take place, two envoys appear from Milan, but even their entreaties and remonstrances make no impression upon the stubborn Duke; whereupon they suddenly take off their false beards, and behold, it is the Duke of Milan himself, with the Duke of Savoy's brother, who has not been executed, but has all this time been kept by the Duke of Milan rather as a friend than a prisoner. The revenge over which the Duke of Savoy has been brooding for ten long years is thus suddenly deprived of its object; why he has been allowed so long to believe in his brother's death remains unexplained. Universal rejoicing and the usual marriages form the conclusion.

As indicated by the title of tragi-comedy, the play is garnished with comic elements, but they are vulgar and rude. There is ribaldry, but no wit, and not a trace of Shakespeare's gracefulness. The fact is, that by the Puritanical persecution and sanctimoniousness, sensuality had been driven back into the minds of the people. It now broke out afresh, not however with the healthy and frank naïveté of the Shakespearean period, but as vicious wantonness. The comic personages of the play are Captain Vasco, and his retainers, Frivolo, Altosto, &c., as far as such fellows can be comic; they are evident copies of Falstaff and his crew. Vasco has captured a widow of eighty, who is said to be wealthy, and as he is penniless he resolves there and then to marry her in spite of her wrinkles, her cough, and her deafness, hoping that she will soon die. The old hag, inconceivable as it may be, gives her consent, and the marriage takes place. On the following morn-

ing the young couple are treated to a serenade which is unequalled in loathsomeness.

In spite of all these defects, 'Love and Honour,' according to Cibber's statement, was the most successful of all Davenant's plays. As we learn from the title of the quarto edition, printed in 1649, it was acted at the Blackfriars, consequently before the closing of the theatres. After the Restoration it was revived with extraordinary splendour. Betterton played Prince Alvaro, and the King lent him his coronation robes for the occasion; the Duke of York and Lord Oxford lent theirs to Harris (Count Prospero) and to Price (Leonel). Mr. Halliwell's statement that in the folio edition of 1673 there are several omissions and alterations, justifies the supposition that the play itself was remodelled.

From the comic part of 'Love and Honour' an inference may be drawn in regard to Davenant's comedies. After the Restoration comedy certainly occupied a different position from tragedy, which in a great measure was due to the personal bias of Charles II., who, according to the evidence given by Dryden, greatly influenced the reconstruction of the English drama. For although Charles II. from political motives was perfectly content that tragedy should be made harmless, yet it was by no means his wish that the Muse of Comedy should become a maid of honour. During his exile he had lived pretty much upon an equal footing with his companions in misfortune, and with them had tried to sweeten his hardships by taking part in popular, and too often licentious amusements. Even after he had ascended the throne he did not con-

sider it a degradation to seek pleasure in the low and dissolute pastimes of public exhibitions. It was the right food for his libertinism. Accordingly it was quite to his taste that comedy as far as possible should follow the beaten track of the Elizabethan era, and if it was to imitate any foreign model at all, he greatly preferred the Spanish comedy to the Parisian, as the intrigues, confusions, and disguises of the former were much more in accordance with his taste. He had evidently become acquainted with the Spanish comedy while abroad, and it was at his express recommendation that Sir Samuel Tuke's 'Adventures of Five Hours' (1663) and Crowne's 'Sir Courtly Nice' were translated from the Spanish. Dryden's 'Wild Gallant,' and his 'Maiden Queen,' with which the monarch was particularly pleased, resembled the Spanish comedy in character. Even where, exceptionally, the English comedy inclined to the French, this exception only served to confirm the rule, inasmuch as the respective French originals were themselves copies from the Spanish. This was, for example, the case with Davenant's 'The Man's the Master' (published in 1669), the greater part of which is a literal translation of Scarron's 'Jodelet, ou le Maître Valet.' [1] By depriving the play of its poetical dress (only in a few passages

[1] The introduction is borrowed from Scarron's 'L'Héritier Ridicule.' The dialogue has been considerably curtailed by Davenant, in accordance with a remark which he makes in his 'Playhouse to be Let,' Act I. :

> The French convey their arguments too much
> In dialogue : their speeches are too long.

Pepys saw the play on the 26th of March 1668, in the Duke's Theatre. 'The most of the mirth,' he says, 'was sorry poore stuffe, of eating of sack posset and slabbering themselves, and mirth fit for clownes; the prologue but poor, and the epilogue little in it but the extraordinariness of it, it being sung by Harris and another in the form of a ballet.'

he rises to blank verse) Davenant has greatly lowered it, and the scenes between the servants, which he has added of his own invention, serve only to increase the coarseness, while in the French drama even the servants were obliged to study propriety of conduct and to keep in the background. Davenant has drawn out these very scenes with unmistakable partiality, because he knew that this would suit the taste of his public. The importance given to external occurrences in the composition is especially perceptible in this play, the levers of the action and of the conflict being the accidental confusion of two portraits, and the freak of the master—which arises out of it without an inner motive —to disguise himself as a servant and to let the servant play his part.

Davenant altered Molière's 'Sganarelle, ou le Cocu Imaginaire' in the same way as he had altered Scarron's 'Jodelet,' except that he brought it down still more to the level of a farce by making all the characters speak in a French-English jargon. 'Sganarelle' (1660), although resembling the Spanish comedy in its character, is indeed not derived from a Spanish original, but is said to be an imitation of an unprinted Italian play, 'Arlichino cornuto per opinione.' Davenant's version forms the second act of his 'Playhouse to be Let,' of which a few words may be said here. The plot is this. The playhouse is to be let during the long vacation, and various applications are made for it. First comes a Monsieur with a company 'of French comediens dat speak a little very good Engelis,' who wish to give farces; then comes a musician, who intends representing a 'heroique story in stilo recitativo;' the third is

a dancing-master, who wants to represent history and morals by dance; 'downright plain history,' he says, 'expressed in figures on the floor, a kind of morals in dumb shows by men and beasts.' By way of explanation, every now and then choruses in rhyme are to be inserted; this he thinks is at least something new, and will take. Lastly comes a poet with a ream of paper and a few followers as poor as himself, who hopes to do a good business with burlesques. All are accepted, and divide the play between themselves; this finishes the first act. In the second act[1] the Frenchman acts his clumsy translation of 'Sganarelle.' In the third act it is the musician's turn, with his 'History of Sir Francis Drake expressed by Instrumental and Vocal Music, and by Art of Perspective in Scenes.' The fourth act is entitled 'The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru,' and contains the ballet of the 'historical dancers that disperse morality by speeches in dumb show.' Lastly, in the fifth act, which has no especial title, the poet delights his audience with a short burlesque on 'Antonius and Cleopatra,' in rhyme.

The comedy of the Restoration, however, was not only after the King's heart, but was certainly one of the few points where the taste of the people agreed with that of the King. It can scarcely be supposed that the middle and lower classes should have at once found pleasure in the Frenchified tragedies and operas, but it seems more likely that some time elapsed before they became accustomed to them; if, therefore,

[1] In the very carelessly printed folio edition, not only this second act but the first also is printed in verse, whereas the second is entirely and the first mostly written in prose. Also in 'Love and Honour,' and in 'The Law against Lovers,' the prose passages are printed as verse.

the theatre did not wish to alienate this portion of the public, it had to offer it its accustomed and acceptable food, at least with regard to comedy, whereas the higher classes had to be satisfied with the opera and drama. It is true that the depravity and rudeness of the taste which only found pleasure in coarse jokes and low licentiousness is most apparent in comedy; the civil war and religious fanaticism had not only repressed the service of the Muses, but lowered social life as well. 'It might,' says Hallam,[1] 'not be easy perhaps to find a scene in any comedy of Charles II.'s reign where one character has the behaviour of a gentleman, in the sense which we attach to the word.' Davenant's own comedies are not important and are completely forgotten; they, in fact, only mark the transition to Wycherley, Congreve, Farquhar, and Vanbrugh. The one best known is 'The Wits,' which appeared in 1656 and 1665 in quarto editions, and is also reprinted in Dodsley's collection. The encouragement of virtue and morals, which Davenant so pompously proclaims to be the aim of dramatic art, has been completely lost sight of by him in comedy; if here he encourages anything at all, it is the very opposite, immorality and coarseness.

The stage of the Restoration connected itself with that of the Elizabethan era by representing a number of Shakespeare's plays, remodelled according to the taste of the time; remodelling in this case means of course as much as bungling. How far Shakespeare was represented in his original shape is a question that can hardly be answered with accuracy. That such

[1] Introd. Lit. Eur., iii. 524.

attempts were made we learn from Evelyn's 'Diary,' who saw 'Hamlet' acted in November, 1662. 'I saw "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" played,' he says; 'but now the old plays began to disgust this refined age, since his Majesty's being so long abroad.'[1] Thus it was the taste of the Court again, influenced by foreign culture, which desired to see Shakespeare remodelled, and it was Davenant who met its wishes. Being the worker of the transition in poetry in general, he also led the way in the field of these alterations. Dryden, Nahum Tate, Sedley, Shadwell, Betterton, Cibber, and others followed in his footsteps. Although accurate dates are wanting, yet it may be safely assumed that Davenant's 'Law against Lovers' was the first of these remodellings. It was followed by his alteration of 'Macbeth,' which from 1674 to 1710 appeared in four editions. Like all of these remodellings, this tragedy also was most splendidly got up, and the music composed for it by Locke has kept its ground till now. A third remodelling was that of the 'Tempest, or the Enchanted Island,' which was acted in 1667 at the Duke's Theatre with great success, and in the manufacture of which Davenant and Dryden had joined each other. The date at which Davenant's acquaintance with Dryden may have begun cannot be ascertained; we only know that they repeatedly worked together, that Davenant in many respects served as a model to his younger friend,[2] that, as related above, he inspired

[1] Yet Betterton played 'Hamlet' for fifty years.

[2] 'Davenant, indeed, and Denham may be reckoned the models of Dryden, so far as this can be said of a man of original genius, and one far superior to theirs. The distinguishing characteristic of Dryden, it has been said by Scott, was the power of reasoning and expressing the result in appropriate language. This, indeed, was the characteristic of the two

Dryden with admiration for Shakespeare, and lastly that Dryden became his successor as Poet Laureate. In regard to the 'Tempest,' Dryden in his preface conscientiously specifies those portions which had been done by his deceased collaborateur, with whom in fact the suggestions and plan of the whole play originated. These portions were the character of Hippolyto, who has never seen a woman, and serves as a pendant to Miranda who has never seen a man; the sisters of Miranda and of Caliban, and the humorous speeches of the sailors. The delineation of the new characters however had, at all events, been left to Dryden, and in what spirit he executed it may be inferred from Scott's criticism. 'Miranda's simplicity,' he says, 'is converted into indelicacy, and Dorinda (her sister) talks the language of prostitution before she has ever seen a man.' Decorations, machinery, music, and dance had again to do their best; the conclusion is formed by a kind of masque. Davenant and Dryden are also said conjointly to have altered 'Julius Cæsar.'[1] This, however, seems to be a mistake, to which perhaps Davenant's burlesque on 'Antonius and Cleopatra' may have given rise. It may be added that Dryden by himself remodelled 'Antonius and Cleopatra' (under the title of 'All for Love') and 'Troilus and Cressida,' and that he prided himself on the former, particularly on the scene between Antonius and Ventidius.

The character of these remodellings will be best

whom we have named, and so far as Dryden has displayed it, which he eminently has done, he bears a resemblance to them.' Hallam, Introd. Lit. Eur., iii. 483.

[1] According to the Biog. Dram., s. Davenant. Sir W. Scott is silent about it.

explained by an examination of the 'Law against Lovers,' which is welded together out of 'Measure for Measure' and 'Much Ado about Nothing,' and met with great success in its day.[1] Even the alteration of the title misrepresents the whole matter, for the law in 'Measure for Measure' is, of course, not directed against lovers but against transgressors. The moral intention of which Davenant boasts on every occasion is thus completely perverted. Davenant, in fact, destroys the whole plan and organism of the play; instead of a compact unity of design he gives a wild confusion of scenes, intrigues, and events; the characters, motives, and plot have become flat and spoiled. Angelo's revival of the old Draconic law is not supported by any motive, as Mrs. Overdone, with her customers and retainers—who give us an insight into the abyss of dissoluteness into which the town has sunk—has been struck out. We hear nothing about the houses of bad repute in the suburbs which are to be 'plucked down,' nothing of the bawds who are sent to prison. Claudio, who in Shakespeare is only the chief sinner, here is the only one. Add to this, that the opposition to the law is made by respectable people instead of reprobates, by virtue instead of vice, for the chief supporters of this opposition are Benedick and Beatrice, borrowed from 'Much Ado.' If everything were not perverted, a young girl could not possibly oppose a law enacted for her protection as well as for that of others. Benedick, who, as

[1] 'I went thither' (viz. to Covent Garden), 'and saw "The Law against Lovers," a good play and well performed, especially the little girl's (whom I never saw act before) dancing and singing; and were it not for her, the losse of Roxalana would spoil the house.' Pepys' Diary, February 18, 1661–2.

in Shakespeare, has just returned home from the wars, is made a brother of Angelo, whereas Beatrice is his ward, and is just about coming of age. The objection of both to marriage is well known, and as Benedick's brother Angelo will not tolerate any other than matrimonial love, this, in Davenant's eyes, is a dramatic situation, and produces a conflict. It seems evident that it was this contrast which incited Davenant to interweave the respective portion of 'Much Ado' into the play. The question now is why do these misogamists take an interest in the lovers? Partly on account of relationship, for Juliet is cousin to Beatrice; still more so, however, on account of the strange fear that the law will cause a depopulation of the country. All nursery-maids, wet-nurses, and milk-women are already in open rebellion against the law. 'The good Duke, when he returns, will find no children left in Turin.' The name of Turin, by-the-bye, reminds us that the play, for no perceptible reason, has been transplanted there from Vienna; Savoy, in fact, is Davenant's favourite scene of action.

As Benedick and Beatrice are admitted among the supporters of the plot, they in some degree limit the action of the disguised Duke, although the latter—as in Shakespeare—receives information of what is going on, and does his utmost to prevent mischief and to lead matters to a good end. He has, however, no well-devised plan of discovering Angelo and punishing him when unmasked. The poet has withdrawn the bases for such a design on the part of the Duke by discarding the character of Mariana and by drawing that of Angelo differently from Shakespeare. Angelo,

with him, after making every effort to seduce Isabella —he even goes so far as to offer to bribe her with his jewels—suddenly strikes a different key by declaring that he only meant to test her, that he had known and loved her even before she had entered her novitiate; that he as little thought of seducing her as of executing her brother. On the contrary, he offers her his hand and agrees to pardon Claudio. Isabella, of course, cannot believe in such an unexpected change, nor can the reader. Angelo has acted the seducer's part too well; in order to make his change of mind in any way credible, he should at least have prepared the audience by a monologue or some word spoken aside. His conduct at the conclusion, when the Duke deals out justice, is likewise pitiable.

Under these circumstances the only task for the poet is to contrive a means for the liberation of the two prisoners, Claudio and Juliet; for this purpose he employs Benedick and Beatrice, who, at an accidental meeting in the third act, and after their indispensable exchange of puns, come to an understanding about a scheme. Benedick is to procure his brother's seal and thus to forge a pardon. Curiously enough, the two quarrel about who is to do this heroic deed, each wishing to take upon himself the danger and honour (!) connected with it. By false representations Benedick induces the honest Escalus to undertake the forgery, which, however, has not the desired result, as on the one hand the jailor grows suspicious, while on the other the plan is thwarted by the Duke. The whole affair ends in smoke, and not a word is said about it in the concluding scene.

Escalus and Benedick are neither charged with the forgery, nor do they confess it of their own accord.

In the next act Claudio and Juliet themselves make an attempt to escape, which is carried out in a genuine Davenantian fashion. The poet is again seized by that fever of generosity with which we have already become acquainted from 'Love and Honour.' Claudio bribes the clown—who has to play the part of the non-existing Pompeius, and who in his foolishness has acted the part of a pimp, which has brought him to prison—with the sum of a thousand crowns to bring his lady-love a page's dress, and to aid her in her flight. The good-natured clown warns him to save himself, because Juliet is not, like him, threatened with death, but will only have to do public penance, a punishment which by the way does not occur in Shakespeare. Claudio, however, is obstinate, and declares any other expedient to be impossible, as the officer on duty, who is in his confidence, is resolved to let no more than one person pass. Juliet meanwhile sends her maid with a note to Claudio, saying that she has bribed the jailor's wife, and that he is to steal into her cell, and thence to escape through the window, the bars of which could easily be removed. Claudio asks whether Juliet will flee with him? The answer is No, as the jailor's wife will on no account let out more than one person. To this Claudio again will not consent, and thus out of pure generosity both remain prisoners, whereas it would have been the simplest plan to let Claudio escape by the help of the jailor's wife, and Juliet by the aid of the officer on duty.

As these devices do not lead to the desired end,

the impetuous Benedick, in the fifth act, carries things to an extreme. He means to free the prisoners by force, with the help of his disbanded troops. But Angelo, who has received timely information of the intended riot, gives orders for doubling the prison guards, and at the same time orders a sortie to be made from the citadel. Negotiations are commenced with the jailor; he, however, remains firm, and from the walls shows the rioters the head of Claudio, whom he pretends has just been beheaded—as in Shakespeare it afterwards proves to be the head of a criminal who has died of illness. Benedick, only the more enraged by the pretended execution of the prisoner, fights like a lion, and, in spite of a slight wound he has received, is on the point of conquering, when suddenly the Duke reappears and restores order.

The Duke's first care is to send both Angelo and Benedick to strict confinement. Angelo, without more ado, admits his guilt and is deeply contrite, although he has less reason to be so than in Shakespeare. As he believes Claudio to be dead and his possessions are said by the jailor to have been confiscated by the state, he presents his property to Juliet by way of atonement and as a provision for her. But his own possessions too have already been seized and given by the Duke to Isabella, who forthwith repairs to the prison and restores them to Angelo, whereupon he again implores her to love him. Then comes the concluding scene, which, however, does not take place at the gate of the town, but in the prison. The Duke, of course, pardons each and all, and as he is old and tired of governing, and without

heirs, declares his intention to withdraw into a monastery in earnest. He gives Isabella's hand to Angelo, and Beatrice's to Benedick, while Claudio and Juliet have already been married by a monk.

These are the principal features of the plot. How Davenant, even in details, deviates from Shakespeare to his own disadvantage may be gathered from the following trait. In Shakespeare's Claudio the love of life breaks out with such irrepressible force that he does not scruple to beseech his sister to save him by her own dishonour. Davenant has done away with this, but only to get as it were out of the frying-pan into the fire, from the natural to the unnatural; with him it is Juliet who makes this request to Isabella. The latter is not at a loss for a reply. She proposes to grant Angelo a nocturnal meeting, at which Juliet is to take her place in the dark, for Claudio's wife, she says, is far more concerned in his rescue than his sister. Juliet breaks off the conversation with the words :—

> Alas ! we know not what is good or ill,

words which may as well be applied to the poet himself, who, by the way, quite overlook that Juliet, in Shakespeare's words, is 'very near her hour.' The proposition of such a deception to be practised on Angelo, is, so to speak, the sole reminiscence which the poet has retained of the character of Mariana.

Davenant, as far as possible, has kept to Shakespeare's text, but of course not without patching the diction as well as the composition. He has altered scenes, lines, and words according to his need, has replaced poetic expressions by everyday phrases, and such as had become obsolete by modern ones. In this respect

his play is of no small interest to the Shakespearean philologist. Where Shakespeare uses the second person singular, Davenant has frequently changed it to the second person plural; some passages have been changed from prose into verse, and vice versâ. In a few great scenes Davenant moreover breaks out into heroic couplets. In a word he has taken the cothurnus off the Muse; he has acted like Professor Heyne of Göttingen, who, after explaining a Pindaric ode to his hearers, used to say, 'Now, gentlemen, let us take out the sublime!' Davenant has cut away all the poetic tendrils from the dialogue—hardly one speech is left unabridged—and the wealth and glory which Shakespeare has scattered in profusion have been reduced to poverty and insipidity. A short example will suffice to exhibit the way in which the text is treated. In the third (fourth) scene of the first act, the Duke, in Shakespeare, says:—

> My holy sir, none better knows than you,
> How I have ever loved the life removed
> And held in idle price to haunt assemblies,
> Where youth, and cost, and witless bravery keeps.
> I have deliver'd to Lord Angelo,
> A man of stricture and firm abstinence,
> My absolute power and place here in Vienna,
> And he supposes me travell'd to Poland;
> For so I have strew'd it in the common ear,
> And so it is received. Now, pious sir,
> You will demand of me why I do this?

In Davenant the lines are:—

> None, holy father, better knows than you,
> How I have ever lik'd a life retir'd;
> And still have weary of assemblies been,
> Where witless youth comes dress'd to be ador'd.
> I have deliver'd to Lord Angelo
> (A man of strictness, and firm abstinence)

My absolute pow'r and place here in Turin;
And he believes me travelling to Spain;
Now (pious sir) you will demand of me
Why I did this?

Sometimes it may seem doubtful if the alterations should not be laid to the account of the copyist or compositor rather than that of the poet. A passage of this kind is met with in the second scene of the first act, which corresponds to the first scene in 'Much Ado.' In Davenant, Balthazar says: 'He is a good soldier, lady,' whereupon Beatrice replies: 'A good soldier to a lady, but what is he to a lord?' In Shakespeare it is: 'And a good soldier, *too*, lady,' etc. It can scarcely be imagined that Davenant should not have been aware that by the omission of the word *too*, the play upon the words is spoilt.

Among Davenant's additions mention must lastly be made of the songs and dances that are inserted, although they may be considered as a matter of course. Even Escalus, Benedick, and Beatrice have to take part in them, and Viola, a younger sister with whom Davenant has provided Beatrice, dances a sarabande to the accompaniment of castagnettes! By this noisy merriment Benedick and Beatrice not only wish to conceal their conspiracy, but still more to annoy Angelo, who lives in Beatrice's house, and is if possible to be driven out of it.

At the end of the play the poet cannot suppress a secret pleasure in his performance; he is once more attacked by his morality-fever, and concludes with the words:—

The story of this day,
When 'tis to future ages told, will seem
A moral drawn from a poetic dream.

THE ORTHOGRAPHY OF SHAKESPEARE'S NAME.

(1870.)

When the German Shakespeare Society, like its predecessor in England, determined to use in its publications the spelling 'Shakespeare,' it of course could not exercise any compulsion upon the conviction of its individual members, who in their writings continue to adopt that orthography of the name which in their several opinion possesses the greatest claim to correctness. As we are thus not a step nearer to a final agreement, it may perhaps be worth the trouble to institute another short enquiry into the state of the case, and to weigh the arguments which support one or the other way of spelling the name.

At first sight nothing seems simpler or more natural than to write the name as the poet himself wrote it, for as a rule every one is the best judge of the spelling and pronunciation of his own name. It is, however, a matter of dispute how Shakespeare himself spelt his name. The six signatures of the poet which possess the only recognised claim of being genuine, and which, by the way, are all that we have of his own handwriting, are the following, given without regard to chronological order. The three signatures on the three sheets of his will of March 25th, 1615-1616; the signature to the mortgage deed relating to the house in the Blackfriars,

purchased from Henry Walker on March 11, 1612–13; the signature to the deed of bargain and sale (March 10, 1612–13) relating to the same property; and lastly the autograph in the folio edition of Florio's translation of 'Montaigne's Essays.' Since Steevens (in 1788) and Malone (in his 'Inquiry,' 1796) facsimiles of all these signatures have been repeatedly published, and the whole of the will as well as the deed of bargain and sale have been photo-lithographed in Mr. Staunton's 'Memorials of Shakespeare.' 'The counterpart of the original conveyance of the property, with Shakespeare's signature,' to borrow Mr. Kenny's words, 'is now in the possession of the Corporation of the City of London, who purchased it in 1841 for 145*l.* The mortgage deed was discovered in 1768, and after having been for some time in the possession of David Garrick, and having been lent to Steevens, it was supposed for many years to have been lost [since 1796]. It was again, however, recovered, and was sold by auction (June 14, 1858), when it was purchased for the trustees of the British Museum for 315*l.*'[1] The genuineness of the sixth autograph, questioned by Mr. Halliwell, has been raised to a high degree of probability by the late distinguished palaeographer, Sir Frederic Madden.[2] It is the most legible of all, and without the slightest doubt shows the orthography 'Shakspere.' The signatures of the will, on the contrary, have evidently been written by a tremulous hand, and particularly the third is difficult to be deciphered, if it can be deciphered at all.

[1] Thomas Kenny, The Life and Genius of Shakespeare (1864), p. 42 seq. The 'Times,' June 15, 1858.

[2] Observations on an Autograph of Shakespeare and the Orthography of his Name. By Sir Frederic Madden. London, 1838.

As, however, Malone, Boaden, Sir Frederic Madden, and other competent authorities have also reduced them to the form 'Shakspere,' we cannot but agree with them, although the two former critics, in contradiction with themselves, have made use of the form 'Shakspeare.' 'As far as we can trust our eyes,' says Boaden, 'the poet did not use an *a* in the second syllable of his name;'[1] and if we are to judge from the facsimiles in Mr. Halliwell's 'Life of Shakespeare,' no exception can be taken to this judgment. Other Shakespearean scholars, such as Chalmers, Drake, and Mr. Halliwell, are however of opinion that the poet was not consistent in the spelling of his name, and that he sometimes wrote 'Shakspere' and sometimes 'Shakspeare.' The latter form both Drake and Mr. Halliwell think they distinguish in the second and third signatures to the will, though Drake never examined the originals. On one point all critics are agreed, that all of the autographs treat the first syllable as a short one, i. e., that the *e* behind the *k* is omitted. It would in no way be surprising if Shakespeare should have written his name in various ways, for a similar carelessness in regard to the orthography of their own names has been pointed out in several of his contemporaries. His own son-in-law signed himself Hawle and Hall, Henslowe sometimes signed his name Heglowe, and Sir Walter Raleigh in 1591 spelt his Rauley, and five years afterwards Ralegh;[2] Edward Alleyn wrote Aleyn, Alleyn, Allen, and Allin. Names, in fact, had not yet any

[1] James Boaden, An Inquiry into the Authenticity of the Various Portraits of Shakespeare. London, 1824, p. 62.

[2] Halliwell, Life of Shakespeare, 278–283. Malone, Life of W. Shakespeare.

fixed orthographical forms, but were treated in the most arbitrary manner. The wavering between Sidney and Sydney, Spenser and Spencer, Kid and Kyd, Middleton and Midleton, Dryden, Dreyden, Driden, and Dreydon is well known. The name Marlowe occurs in 10 different spellings, Throckmorton in 16, Gascoigne in 19, Percy in 23, Cholmondeley in 25, Percival in 29, and Bruce in 33.[1] But of all, the name of our poet is the one which exhibits the greatest number of variations, no fewer than 55 having been counted. In the records of the Town Council of Stratford the name of the poet's father occurs 166 times in 14 different forms, viz. :—

1. Shackesper	4 times	8. Shakspeyr	17 times
2. Shackespere	3 „	9. Shakysper	4 „
3. Shacksper	4 „	10. Shakyspere	9 „
4. Shackspere	2 „	11. Shaxpeare	69 „
5. Shakespere	13 „	12. Shaxper	8 „
6. Shaksper	1 „	13. Shaxpere	18 „
7. Shakspere	5 „	14. Shaxspeare	9 „[2]

In the Stratford registers of baptisms and funerals also various forms of the name are met with, all with the first syllable short; by far the most frequent is 'Shakspere.' This agrees with the fact that in Shakespeare's marriage bond of November 28, 1582, the name in both places (it only occurs twice) is written 'Shagspere.' Besides these, there occur the forms

[1] George R. French, Shakspeareana Genealogica. London and Cambridge, 1869, p. 347 seqq. The Works of Chr. Marlowe, ed. by Dyce (1862), p. xi. note.

[2] C. Mathews, in A. Wivell's Inquiry into the History, Authenticity, and Characteristics of the Shakspeare Portraits. London, 1827, p. 224 seq. 'Mr. George Wise,' says Allibone, s. Shakespeare, p. 2,006 b, 'has recently amused himself by drawing up a chart (Philadelphia, 1868), which exhibits 1,906 ways of spelling the name [of the poet].'

Schakespeire (1460), Shakespeyre (1464), Chacsper (1476), Shaxespere (1545), Shakispere, Shackspire (1589), Sheakspeare (1600), Shakespeere (1602), Shexpere (1604), Shaxberd (in the Stationers' registers) Shakespear (1605), and others.

The distinguished grammarian Professor Koch has endeavoured to reduce this confusion to order, and to explain the laws by which the pronunciation and orthography of the name must have been gradually changed in the different stages of the language.[1] 'If,' he says, 'the name existed in Anglo-Saxon its form would have been Scac-spëre or Sceac-spëre; in New Anglo-Saxon it would be Shac-spere or Shak-spere; in Old and Middle English we should have to expect Shak-sper or Shax-per; this shortening of the last syllable does not, however, seem generally to have prevailed, probably because the long sound was supported by the noun *spere*, perhaps also because the French pronunciation was apt to lengthen the terminations of *er* and *ere*, as well as all others.' Koch considers that the poet's own signature varies between Shakspere in Montaigne, and Shakspeare or Shackspeare in the will, and hence decides in favour of 'Shakspere,' which, according to him, is the correct Middle English spelling. 'Shakspeare,' he thinks, 'is the transition form which, by inserting the *a*, is intended to indicate the pronunciation of the *e*.' The forms with the first syllable long, he explains as having arisen from a poetical application of the name, and finds them tending to a certain aim.

[1] Jahrbuch für Romanische und Englische Literatur, 1865, Bd. 6, Heft 3, S. 322–326.—The above was written when Professor Koch was still among the living (1874).

This is, however, contradicted by their occurrence in documents of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, at a time when the name was not yet familiar to poets. Moreover in the three oldest documents in which the name has been found (of the years 1278, 1357, and 1375 respectively) it is written 'Shakespere.'[1] Koch does not state the spelling of the old editions quite correctly, inasmuch as for the sake of his theory he makes the exception precede the rule; 'the old editions,' he says, 'have Shakspeare ("Lear," 1608); more usually Shakespeare.' The whole of his argumentation —we say it without wishing to offend Professor Koch —reminds us of Goethe's lines :—

> Then steps the philosopher forth to show,
> How of necessity it must be so:
> If the first be so, the second is so,
> And therefore the third and the fourth is so.[2]

But proper names are stubborn things, which will not bend to the laws of historical grammar. It is true that three groups can be distinguished in the numerous varieties of spelling the poet's name. First the pure appellative form with two long syllables (Shakespeare); secondly, the group with the shortened first syllable (Shakspeare, Shakspere); and lastly, the shortening of both syllables, which however did not meet with general acceptance (Shaksper, &c.). It would be difficult to ascertain with any certainty which form is actually the oldest; the age of the appellative form seems however to be supported by the family name of Pope Hadrian IV. (who died in 1154), Breakspeare or

[1] French, Shakspeareana Genealogica, in the passage quoted above.
[2] From Professor Blackie's translation of Faust.

Breakspear, which likewise has the pure appellative form with two long syllables; at least it is generally so written, whether in perfect accordance with the documents, we cannot say.

From the records of the Stratford Town Council and the church registers, it appears that at Stratford the first syllable of the name was generally pronounced short, for the mode of spelling the name with a short first syllable occurs there most frequently. But the matter has a very different aspect if we consult the original editions of Shakespeare's plays. In all the quartos the name is written 'Shakespeare,' with the only exception of the quarto of 'King Lear,' of 1608, and that of the 'Two Noble Kinsmen,' of 1634, where in both cases it is 'Shakspeare.' It is the same in those editions of 'Venus and Adonis' (1593), and of 'Lucretia' (1594), which were published under the poet's own eye, in the first edition of the Sonnets (1609), and in all the folios. Frequently there is even a hyphen between the two syllables, whereby the length of the first is made still more apparent. In the commendatory verses, where the poet is mentioned by contemporary authors, he is always called 'Shakespeare.' Mr. Halliwell refers his readers to the celebrated eulogy by Milton:—

> What need my Shakespeare, for his honour'd bones, &c.

and is shocked at the idea that the name there could be read with a short first syllable. The well-known witticisms to which the name gave rise likewise presuppose the length of the first syllable. Greene's bitter joke that Shakespeare considered himself 'the only

Shake-scene in a country;' Thomas Bancroft's epigram,

> Thou hast so used thy pen, or shook thy speare,
> That poets startle;

and B. Jonson's well-known line,

> In each of which he seems to shake a lance,

would otherwise lose their point. But not only the original editions exhibit this form of the name, the London documents do the same. In the draft of a grant of arms to John Shakespeare of 1596 (in Mr. Halliwell's Life of Shakespeare), the name is always spelt 'Shakespeare,' in that of 1599 it is 'Shakespere,' in the text of the above-mentioned deed of bargain and sale, of March 11, 1612–13, and in the patent 'pro Laurentio Fletcher et Willielmo Shakespeare,' granted by James I. (May 17 and 19, 1603), it is likewise Shakespeare (according to Mr. Collier).

These facts prove with tolerable certainty that in London, especially in its literary and well-educated circles, the name was differently pronounced and written to what it was in Stratford, that is to say, with the first syllable long, and that the shortening of it was a provincialism—Boaden says, 'a Stratford barbarism'—an opinion which, among others, is shared by Disraeli, in his 'Curiosities of Literature' and by Mr. Halliwell.[1] But, as we have seen, even the people of Stratford themselves were not altogether unacquainted with the more refined pronunciation of the name, particularly in cases where a more careful language was required.

[1] Mr. Halliwell's Introduction to Shakespeare's Midsummer-Night's Dream, 88–94.

In the 'Fine levied on the purchase of New Place by Shakespeare, in 1597,' one of the most carefully written Stratford documents, the name occurs five times, and is each time most distinctly spelt 'Shakespeare.'[1] The other documents relative to this purchase also exhibit the same spelling. On all the tombstones of the poet's family in the church at Stratford, the name is likewise 'Shakespeare;' only under the bust of the poet we read 'Shakspeare,' and upon Susanna's grave, 'Shakespere,' with the first syllable long, but no *a* in the second. The poet's brother also wrote his name Gilbert Shakespere.[2] All these circumstances are of decisive weight, and the most eminent editors, among others the Rev. A. Dyce, Mr. Halliwell, and Mr. Collier, have accordingly determined in favour of the spelling 'Shakespeare;' even Sir Frederic Madden allows the justice of its claim.

Thus there seems to be a discrepancy between the pronunciation and the spelling of the educated contemporaries and the poet himself, inasmuch as the latter inclined more to the Stratford provincialism. We have the choice between two, indeed very opposite explanations of this fact, of which we may select that one which corresponds best to the idea we have formed of the poet and his character. It may be imagined that Shakespeare had no taste for such a trifling question as the orthography of names, but that with the indifference of genius he employed that form which came most readily to his pen, and that this, as a rule, was

[1] See the facsimile in Mr. Halliwell's Historical Account of New Place, &c. London, 1864, p. 17.

[2] Mr. Halliwell's Life of Shakespeare, 282.

the provincial one to which he had been accustomed from his youth. In complete opposition to this interpretation, however, it may also be thought that the poet attached a certain importance to the form of his name, and intentionally differed from the general custom. Proper names with appellative form and meaning have at no time been considered as pleasing, much less as aristocratic; their bearers have therefore constantly endeavoured to turn them into genuine surnames by making small orthographical changes, so as to give them a nobler colouring. Thus Shepherd has been changed into Sheppard, Young into Yonge, Collier into Collyer, Cook into Cooke, White into Whyte, Green into Greene, Smith into Smyth or Smythe, and numerous others. Poets especially have very frequently indulged in such whims. William Davenant, as we have seen, on being knighted, changed his name into D'Avenant, and in consequence had to put up with the ridicule of his contemporaries on account of this aristocratic fancy. Bishop Percy's name was in reality Piercy, but according to a genealogy drawn up by himself, he wished to prove himself of royal descent and as belonging to the celebrated house of Percy; he also changed his wife's name on her epitaph from Gutteridge into Goodriche.[1] Charlotte Bronte (Currer Bell), signed herself Bronti, whereas on her tombstone, and on all those belonging to the family, the name is inscribed in its generally recognised form. She had less occasion to do so than others, for her name had a good sound and was without an appellative meaning; it is thought to be an abbreviation of

[1] The Athenæum, 1867, ii. 651.

the Irish Bronterre.[1] It is also known of Lord Byron that in the pronunciation of his name he deviated from rule and custom by pronouncing it almost as if it were a monosyllable. It seems not at all incredible that Shakespeare too should have acted in a similar manner in regard to his name, and have endeavoured to fashion it into an aristocratic one; that he was not altogether free from aristocratic inclinations is proved by his father's repeated application for a grant of arms, for it may justly be presumed that the father acted on the son's advice and instigation in the matter. He may possibly have been vexed by those jokes upon his name, and in the provincial shortening of the first syllable may have found a welcome handle for freeing it of its appellative meaning. On this supposition the form 'Shakspere' would seem to possess also the greatest intrinsic probability of being the poet's own spelling, for it differs most from the appellative form customary in his day. The noun 'spear' occurs eight times in Shakespeare's plays, and three times in his poems, and is always spelt 'speare' in the first folio. 'Shakspere' therefore deviates in two points from the appellative form, 'Shakspeare' only in one.

Be that as it may, the result is that we have only the choice between 'Shakspere' and 'Shakespeare.' The former is a provincialism, and in all probability the poet's own way of writing his name, whatever may have induced him to adopt it. The latter is

[1] Harriet Martineau, Biographical Sketches, 2nd Edit. London, 1869, p. 360.

the form of the name generally used and recognised by his educated contemporaries, and is the one upon which we can moreover depend with incomparably greater certainty than upon the former. The decision, therefore, cannot be difficult.

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